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THE

PROTECTION OF MAJORITIES;

OR,

CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO ELECTORAL REFORM.

With Other Papers.

BY

JOSIAH PHILLIPS QUINCY.

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ROBERTS BROTHERS.
1876.

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INTRODUCTORY.

AS a contribution not inappropriate to the literature of our National Centennial, I offer some views of the direction in which electorial reform is possible in America. My conclusions in this matter were embodied in a paper (much of which is here reproduced) published last year in "Old and New," a magazine now extinct. I was agreeably surprised at the interest that this paper awakened. Persons wholly unknown to me and of widely different pursuits took pains to express their indorsement of the remedy it proposed, as well as their general acceptance of its expositions of the failure of our existing methods of representation. I was not, however, prepared to find that hope of relief through the adoption of Mr. Hare's system of voting was so generally extinguished in the breasts of our more thoughtful electors. The late Mr. Mill's unbounded

admiration of this elaborate scheme for the representation of minorities commended it to the favor of many patriotic Americans, who have at length come to accept Mr. Mill's own conclusion, that its introduction would be scarcely practicable in the United States.

The colloquial form, in which the paper was originally written, has been preserved, as it enables me to give the objections to our caucus system very much as I have heard them uttered by voters of our New-England towns. That venerable bugbear, "the tyranny of majorities," has ceased to frighten the leaders of opinion in these little societies. They clearly see that it is tyranny of minorities that democracy, with its present methods, is calculated to produce.

The Senator who fills the conventional part of objector in the imaginary conversation is not quite the man of straw who is commonly cast in that character. My views upon representation have been discussed in several companies; and such objections as they elicited I have stated as accurately as I could, and answered as well as I know how. If my Journalist might utter himself as wisely as some

gentlemen of his profession whom I occasionally meet, the most exacting reader would confess that he was worth reporting.

It would not be difficult to draught an act of legislation that should embody the suggestions of the following pages. But it is not time to attempt this; and it would require more than one mind to do it in the best way. What is here said is submitted, not as a system, but as suggestions in aid of a system. The first step is to concentrate public opinion upon the urgent necessity of reform, and then to agree upon the direction in which it may be practicable. Whether a philosopher, put under bonds to construct an unassailable Utopia, would adopt our theory of government, is a question which in this present year of grace we shall do well to put aside. For my own part, I accept the American principle of government by majorities with all cordiality, confident that we may constantly eliminate its evils by improving its methods.

The other papers in this volume were contributed to the periodical already mentioned, and may be set down as "padding," if the reader can find no better use for them.

Political liberty depends everywhere upon the free action and frequent and genuine manifestation of the public will; but the free action and genuine manifestation of that will depend upon the mode of proceeding observed in going through the several steps that must be taken before any such result can be produced. . . . Without any regulations at all, a general will, or pretended general will, may come now and then to be declared. But of what sort? Such an one as the will of him who gives his purse to save his life, or signs a deed he never read, or takes an oath with an *et cætera* at the end of it, is to the free and enlightened will of the individual. — JEREMY BENTHAM: *Essay on Political Tactics.*

The integrity of the suffrage is constantly assailed, elections are secured by bribery, office is openly sold and purchased, and every political triumph is succeeded, or rather preceded and influenced, by a scramble for the spoils. Instead of a government by the people, we are threatened, if the threat be not already fulfilled, with an oligarchy of demagogues, for which a decent constitutional monarchy would be welcome. — DR. A. P. PEABODY: *Harvard Baccalaureate Sermon for* 1875.

THE PROTECTION OF MAJORITIES.

MINISTER. Then, if there be no objection, we will renew the discussion that was interrupted last week. Our friend the Journalist was asked to prepare an essay upon representation that should give his views upon the subject, as well as elicit ours. Well, sir, are we to be favored with one of those elaborate and stately compositions which all friendly critics confess are "highly creditable to American literature"?

Journalist. You will get nothing of the sort from me. What I have to say must be given in an easy conversational way, or not at all. Let us submit the essential elements of the question to the common sense of common people. I have no essay to read to you, but only

a little story. I want to do just what the lawyers do when a legal principle is questioned, — feign a case for the purpose of throwing light upon doubtful points. The fact is, my attention was caught the other day by this announcement which I cut from one of our exchanges: —

> We are gratified to learn that Madame Rougelot, a medium of distinction, has recently been entranced by the spirit of Æsop.

I could not help wondering whether the old story-teller proposed to reform our modern world with fables adapted to its instruction. Surely the resources of that venerable vehicle for edification have not been exhausted. The fable is, after all, a very convenient form for registering certain generalizations from our experience; and I was rash enough to try my hand at it. No, I have not attempted to imitate that terse and concentrated way of putting things for which Æsop used to be remarkable. My fable must be supposed to be given during a period when Madame Rougelot was not under perfect control, and spoke with that diffuse-

ness which seems to be necessary, when, as we are so often told, "the conditions are unfavorable."

Senator. What title do you give your fable?

Journalist. I have not thought of that yet. Let me see: till I think of a better name, I will call it

THE MANAGER'S MILLENNIUM.

A certain political manager, having taken several glasses too much in celebration of a successful election, repaired to the town-hall, where his fellow-citizens had assembled, and harangued them after this fashion: —

"While offering my congratulations upon the recent triumphs of our glorious democracy, I feel constrained to remind you how far we still are from enjoying the manifold blessings which our methods of representation should be made to secure. Our exquisite caucus machinery — so admirably calculated to promote the government of the people by the people — should do much more for you than it has yet accomplished. No, my friends, I will not undervalue what you have obtained. You are graciously permitted to recognize the claims of Mr. Smoothman to represent you in Congress; and in your name we

can put Mr. Anything into the General Court. As my remarks will be telegraphed to all parts of our glorious Union, I borrow these names from Bunyan's comprehensive directory, which is good for every locality. I allow that we have no difficulty in making Mr. Byends Superintendent of Highways, and in permitting his brother and cousins to spend your money as County Commissioners. These offices are, of course, filled as the intelligence of this intelligent community has dictated. The Sovereign Will of the People (capitals here, Mr. Reporter) designates the men who occupy these places of trust. But, alas! my friends, it grieves me to remember how many of your servants are not yet elected in this fair and impartial way. There, for instance, is old Dr. Faithful, who has held the office of leading physician to this community for twenty years past. Rich and poor insist upon sending for him, and will see no one else if he can be had. I estimate that you pay for his services not far from four thousand dollars a year. This is all wrong. An office of such value should be in the gift of the people. Its occupant should be nominated and elected every year in the usual way. Suppose we had had an office of chief town physician, with a salary of four thousand dollars, drawn from the public treasury: do you suppose that such a man as Faithful could have monopolized it for a score of years? The just principle of rota-

tic . alone would have forbidden it. Why, the old f· w does not belong to a single secret society, and ha. 10 political influence whatever. His claims could no be weighed for a moment against those of young Dr Gripeman, who has done so much work upon our party committee, and who has discovered in a common pasture-weed an infallible cure for all diseases. Just give us a chance to use our caucus engineering, — I mean, of course, let us appeal to the great heart of the people, — and we will soon put Faithful on the shelf, and give our useful Dr. Gripeman his turn at the pay and patronage. Then there is the case of Deacon Honesty, our leading grocer: I have no doubt that he lays by a snug thousand of our dollars every year from the profits of his business. Our people, you see, have got into the way of trading with him, just because they believe in his integrity, and feel sure that his goods are what he represents them to be. Other grocers, from time to time, come into our town, drive beautifully-painted carts about the streets, and make scarcely enough to pay for their advertisements. Would that there were an office of chief grocer to be filled by the suffrages of this free people! I have a friend in that business whose work has been most important in sending Smoothman to Congress, and who always keeps a glass of something good in the back shop. Were there such an office as I have suggested, who

doubts that my good friend Mr. Littlegrace would receive the party nomination he so richly deserves? Why are we not able to put Robert Starveling and Tom Snout into the profitable places of chief tailor and head tinker to this community? They are genial, good fellows; always ready to leave their business to amuse us with private theatricals, for which they have such remarkable talents. But it is unnecessary to contrast their hearty and popular traits with the uninteresting demeanor of the persons who trample upon the will of the people by keeping possession of these offices. But, as a crowning outrage upon your liberties, consider the very desirable position which is held by Reverend Mr. Greatheart, a person who has never been indorsed by a nominating convention, or voted for at the polls. Have you any idea, fellow-citizens, what an amount of money annually passes through that man's hands? Just because those whom Heaven has prospered trust his judgment, while the poor and unfortunate believe in his tenderness and compassion, he has the distribution of charitable funds, which I confess that my own fingers are itching to handle. There should, of course, be a town almoner, chosen by the people, who would know how to distribute these moneys 'where they would do most good.' Were such an office to be created, I should, in all confidence, offer myself as your candidate. I feel certain that I could carry the caucus, and secure

the nomination. My election would follow as a matter of course; and, with the means thus placed at my disposal by the will of a free community, I would reward my friends and punish my enemies, and vindicate the beauty of representative government before the world."

Having soared to this eloquent climax, the orator was overcome by his feelings, and sank into a chair. A shrewd farmer who was present concluded the meeting with substantially these remarks: —

"We have to thank our friend, or, to speak more correctly, the stimulant he has taken, for the most suggestive and encouraging speech he ever uttered. It should go far to dispel that distrust of popular government which political corruption has so often induced. Why, it never occurred to me, till the gentleman committed the blunder of pointing it out, that our leading doctor, minister, and grocer, are indeed *chosen by the people*, and kept in their offices without any nonsensical talk of 'claims' or 'rotation.' They are rechosen every year from among many competitors, and represent the intelligent voice of this community. And it is just as evident that the monopolizers of our political offices are not chosen by the people at all. They are appointed by managers. They represent, not the intelligence of the people, but the interests of demagogues and wire-pullers. There must be some way to break out of the snares that have

been set for us. Let us take courage, my neighbors, and demand some better system of nominating and voting. Why should not the men we are said to choose as legislators represent the sense of the majority as creditably as the men we really choose as physicians, or lawyers, or blacksmiths? We can afford to trust the people; but we can no longer trust politicians with their caucus machinery."

Merchant. The moral of your fable seems to accord with a bit of advice once given by Grotius in answer to the question, what writer upon politics was best worth studying. The inquirer was directed to procure a volume of blank paper, use his own eyes and ears, and set down what he learned.

Journalist. You have caught my meaning. We were puzzling the other night over the problem of securing a just representative government, and almost gave it up as insoluble. But did we go to work in the best way? One is easily frightened while considering the vast extent of our American territory, and the different requirements of its inhabitants. Suppose we throw these complexities out of the inquiry.

Let us give up surveying mankind from China to Peru, notwithstanding the recommendation of Dr. Johnson's sonorous stanza. We all know this New-England town of X——, with its nine thousand inhabitants, pretty well by this time. Now, if any arrangement can be suggested whereby the better representation of this community would be secured, the chances are that it would be applicable to many similar communities; and even those constituencies whose ignorance and lawlessness would prevent any present improvement from its adoption, might, in time, grow up to realize its advantages.

Senator. What in the world is coming now! One more adaptation of Mr. Hare's scheme of minority representation, I suppose. That sort of thing is well enough to amuse college professors; but we practical men understand that any attempt to run good men into office without organizing, drilling, and paying, is moonshine. But let us have your patent device for dispensing with managers, with its wheelwork all adjusted and in running order.

Journalist. I have no such plan to propose. I can only indicate the direction in which our deliverance must be sought. I accept the verdict, "not practicable," which Mr. Hare's interesting and ingenious system for representing minorities has elicited in America. It is not in accordance with our traditions, and the revolution in public opinion necessary to adopt it is not to be expected. Our people have been accustomed to consider the representation of majorities as the essence of democracy; and it would be difficult to uproot this conviction, even if it were desirable to do so. But I am not sure that it is desirable. Minorities, although not represented in legislatures, will always modify majorities, and restrain their action. Our fathers were right in preferring territorial to what is called personal representation. The influence of persons in the minority is most effectively exerted directly upon their neighbors. We want their educational influence just where they stand. In opposition to the views of Mr. Hare, I believe in the political organization of localities. The

separation into classes is the danger from which we have most to fear. Mr. Hare's system, it seems to me, would tend to encourage this: an honest local representation reduces it to a minimum. Whenever we split into college cliques, foreigners' cliques, workingmen's cliques, and so on, we shall be apt to fill our legislatures with narrow, headstrong men, who feel secure of their places. They will be class-representatives, not representatives of the people. They will carry out, if they can, any class-policy to which they may be pledged, despite the bitter speeches which equally extreme class-delegates will have the privilege of making at them. But it is difficult to see how any policy could be fairly tried under such an arrangement. It is surely desirable that opinions honestly held by a majority of the people should be tested by experiments made under favorable conditions. Such conditions, however, could scarcely be secured in the "happy family" of legislative objectors which Mr. Hare would exhibit. I have found, too, that our American advocates of minority

representation are apt to make admissions which discredit their remedy. Here is Mr. Fisher's pamphlet upon "Reform in our Municipal Elections." He is writing in 1866, and tells us that in the city of Philadelphia "every thing is ill done, and we are burdened with taxation to the very limits of pressure." And then a few sentences farther on we find this significant confession: "The great majority of the voters in our city are trustworthy, and have a real interest in the stability of property and the economical administration of municipal affairs." Why, then, ask for a representation of minorities, when a *real* representation of this great majority of trustworthy voters would meet all difficulties?

Minister. But might not local elections be conducted with advantage upon Mr. Hare's method?

Journalist. So long as caucus nominations were made, I think that the managers would be astute enough to cope with it. They would nominate their private candidate, with a list of their private alternatives, and thrust their

printed ballot into the hands of voters as the regular party ticket.

Merchant. The trouble is, that too many of our educated men have come to despair of any tolerable government by majorities. An eminent English writer has recently defined democracy to be the management and control of social arrangements by the least-educated classes, by those least trained to foresee and measure consequences. And has not Carlyle exhausted the resources of language in pillorying its chaotic pretensions?

Journalist. If democracy seems to fit Mr. Greg's definition, it is owing to our imperfect arrangements for getting at its real will, for penetrating to its essential heart. But put it into conditions where there is true freedom of thought and action, and Carlyle himself shall testify to the promise that is in it. Here are the Latter-Day Pamphlets: let me read the passage I was thinking of: "Votes of men are worth collecting, if convenient. True, their opinions are generally of little wisdom, and

can, on occasion, reach to all conceivable and inconceivable degrees of folly; but their instincts, where these can be deciphered, are wise and human." And here lies the impregnable defence of the democratic principle. These *instincts* are, on the whole and in the long-run, reliable. To represent them in government is to secure a maximum of improvement in the condition of men. But, to be represented, these instincts must be *deciphered;* and how to do this is the riddle the sphinx proposes, — with the old death-penalty, perhaps, if the answer is missed.

Minister. It is of the first importance to clean the meaning of the word "represent." Perhaps some of you have seen this clever little book by Mr. Charles Nordhoff, called "Practical Politics for Young People." Let me read a manuscript note that I thought best to add to one of the chapters before giving it to my boys. Young Mr. Walter Nordhoff is instructed by his father that ours is "a representative government, and not a government of the ablest men," — a phrase

which carries the paralyzing assumption that the two must be forever incompatible. Youths who are taught this doctrine, upon beholding our government as it frequently exists, will naturally shrug their shoulders, declare that it is at all events *representative*, and abandon all hope of improving it. But are our American governments, such as we commonly see them, representative? This is the previous question, which claims a just precedence. When the younger Mr. Nordhoff sees some "dull old farmer" who has been set up as a legislator, — perchance to be used in the log-rolling operations of knaves, — he is told to remember that this incompetent personage represents the agricultural interest, and that it is a very good thing he is not greatly above his constituents. "He knows how to speak from their standpoint," says his father, "and they have a right to be heard." Now, here is my comment, which is more in accordance with the doctrine of our fabulist: —

Avoid the error of supposing that the majority of your fellow-citizens do not wish to be represented by

the ablest and best men that the community can furnish. Plato finely says that the mind of man is unwillingly deprived of truth. It is no less true, that, when knaves and fools are conspicuous in government, the people are unwillingly deprived of representation. To "represent," my dear boys, the dictionary will tell you, means "to be present for." Mr. Emerson has written a little book with the impressive title, "Representative Men." They are by no means average men whom he considers, but those high and noble souls whom we common men have elected to represent us,— Plato, Shakespeare, Goethe, and some others. Theologians have confidently given to Him who was without sin the honorable title of the Representative of sinful humanity. If I have a suit in court, I seek diligently for a lawyer of ten times my own capacity to represent me and my cause aright. Imagine the neighbors of Dr. Brown-Séquard refusing to allow him to represent them by the sick-beds of their loved ones, because, forsooth, his knowledge was greater, and his powers of observation more highly trained, than their own! If you see a constituency which is nominally represented by a "dull old farmer" or a self-seeking knave, beware how you assume that you know the real choice of the people. Dull old farmers, if they are allowed to have their way, had much rather be represented by an intelligent farmer several years on the right side of his dotage. He knows how to speak

from their standpoint far better than if he himself were superannuated and infirm. One hundred years ago there were many dull old farmers, as sordid, and as little picturesque in their private lives, as any we can find to-day. But what a Congress they sent to New York to represent them! — Jefferson, Lee, Henry, John and Sam Adams, Jay, Franklin, and others, who were scarcely their inferiors. Well might Lord Chatham declare that the Continental Congress was unsurpassed by any body of men in solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion. Dare we say that these men did not *represent* the people whose interests were intrusted to their care? If the conclusion is ever forced upon you that the majority does not really *wish* to put forward honest and able men as its representatives, then democracy is a delusion; and the sooner the man on horseback tramples over it, the better for all concerned.

Journalist. I approve what you have read. My thesis is, that, when bad and incapable men are found at the head of public affairs, it is not because the majority is represented, but because, in some way or other, the majority is deprived of representation. And this doctrine has no connection with any *Vox populi*, *Vox Dei*, absurdity, and countenances no rhetorical cant about "the honest majority." The individuals

composing the majority are, of course, indifferent honest. They are governed by their private interests like the minority. But whereas it is constantly for the interests of cliques and minorities to put knaves and simpletons into office, it never can be the interest of the majority to be represented by them. Once grasp this truth, and you will see that the solution to the problem of representation does not lie in the direction where Mr. Hare and others have sought for it. But the representation of the majority requires as condition precedent *the protection of the majority.* The majority must be protected by the State, very much as the court protects a jury from the arts of unscrupulous advocates, and from the bribes and threats with which private interests stand ready to assail it.

But let us return for a moment to the suggestions of the fable. Suppose a stranger arrives in this town of X——, and wishes to select the best physician from among the ten or dozen practitioners whose signs are displayed in the streets. Would there be a surer way of dis-

covering the right man than for the inquirer to pass a morning in the post-office, and put the question to all who entered? The voters, you see, would be women as well as men, poor as well as rich, foolish as well as wise. Probably not half a dozen of them would have any knowledge of anatomy or therapeutics; yet I would rather trust an honest majority-vote of these every-day people than the Latin certificate of a medical college.

Merchant. You would be right. In nineteen cases out of twenty, you would hit the man.

Journalist. Now, if we went deep enough into the matter, we should find that the judgment of some score of instructed persons really designates the man whom the majority shall recognize and pay as their leading doctor, or, if you like, as their leading carpenter, blacksmith, or lawyer. In a word, it is the sanction of the majority to a selection made by a minority that we have reason to trust.

Merchant. I agree that the social decisions of a community are guided by those whose knowl-

edge entitles them to deal most intelligently with the matter in hand.

Journalist. Yes; and you will find this true of certain political decisions which the managers do not care to control. Take the public libraries which are springing up all over New England. Their directors are chosen by a popular vote; yet you will find them to be the most suitable men that the different towns can furnish; and nobody thinks of turning them out when election-day comes round. The reason is, that as there is neither pay nor patronage attached to these places, but only responsibility and sober work, the politicians do not want them. They stand out of the way, and let the people put in their best men, and keep them in. The managers have here no special interests as managers, but only the general interests of citizens.

Merchant. This is quite true in X——; though I confess I never thought of its significance. If the votes of Hodge and Patrick confirm the selection of a minority when the best scholar in town is wanted to direct a library,

why should they fail us when a legislator of sound sense and unquestioned integrity is to be provided for nation or state? There is the school committee too. We are apt to get our best men upon that board; though this is not always the case.

Journalist. The explanation is obvious. There is a small payment and a little patronage attached to the office of school-committee man; and its attainment is held to be the first step upon the ladder of political preferment. Still, as it is the lowest step, and one which the active politician can dispense with, its possessors more nearly represent the people than when the higher offices are in question.

Senator. We can all agree that the caucus is abused; but that is because the right sort of men don't come to it. Not long ago, the saying of Mr. Tom Hughes, that in America educated men take no interest in politics, was going the rounds of the press. Now, if this is true, getting rid of the caucus will not make things better.

Journalist. But it is utterly untrue. Our educated men are always ready to give unrequited service to the public, when it can be done without the loss of self-respect, and when some definite good can be accomplished. Nothing is more hopeful than the readiness with which our best citizens will interest themselves in public work. The busiest man in the town instantly accepts the call to give his time gratuitously to the formation of its library. The commission which is appointed to revise a state constitution or a city charter is easily composed of men whose skill and intelligence would command thousands, were they wanted for private interests. What Mr. Hughes ought to have said is something like this: Men of high character and special intelligence are deprived of that influence in public affairs which it is the desire of the community they should exercise.

Merchant. Here are some sentences by Col. Higginson, that I cut from the paper the other day: "The man of education is the natural leader of American affairs. Everybody wishes

him to lead: nobody grudges it. He has nominally but one vote; and he certainly needs but one, for practically he has a thousand. He has such opportunity of influence, through press and platform, that his mere personal vote is the smallest element in his power." Now, this last sentence declares a doctrine which I cannot indorse. I deny that the average American of sound education — using that word in no pedant's sense — has these wonderful opportunities. To exert political influence through the press, or from the platform, requires exceptional gifts and special training. No doubt a few persons who have made writing a profession, and who were born orators, can do much with instruments that they are drilled to handle. But what am I to do, an average every-day citizen, who, struggling amid the fierce competitions of business, suddenly find myself seized by "the garrote of the caucus," as "The North-American Review" happily calls it? It is mockery to tell me that I have full liberty to hire a hall and make speeches, or that there is no law to pro-

hibit me from contributing a series of dashing leaders to the newspapers.

Senator. Let me catechise you a little. You complain that you have no adequate representation in government. You vote, I suppose?

Merchant. Why, yes: I generally avail myself of that precious privilege of a freeman, and indicate which of two professional candidates I think least objectionable.

Senator. Do you attend either of the party caucuses?

Merchant. Not always. I have attended a good many in my day; but my hope of accomplishing any thing through their agency is about extinct.

Senator. Do you mean to say that your presence at primary meetings has no influence in the selection of candidates?

Merchant. I mean to say that it has no appreciable influence. I am no orator; and, even if I were, it would be little to the purpose. The chances are, that I find the hall in possession of a secret society, organized, drilled, and ready to

thrust its printed ballots into every man's hand. This demonstration is the result of work that has been going on for two months previous. It is a matter of wire-pulling, or "subsoiling," as the last cant term is.

Senator. It would seem, then, that you should go to work two months before the caucus, and pull counter-wires.

Merchant. Now you ask too much. I have no time to act in this way; and excuse me for saying that it is a business which a man who respects himself scarcely likes to undertake. Besides, I can no more compete with a professional manager than I can with a professional rope-dancer. The State has undoubtedly a right to ask that every citizen's character and judgment shall be felt in politics. But then it must provide some way in which his influence may have its just weight. It cannot call upon him to neglect the business by which he earns his bread, and study a special profession which is utterly repugnant to his taste, to say nothing of his morality.

We have all read the admirable sketch of caucus management in a recent number of "Harpers' Magazine." Honestus attends a primary meeting with the single desire of discharging his political duties. He is cordially welcomed by the managers, who assign him a conspicuous place in their proceedings. The end of it is, that "one of the most disreputable and dishonest of public sharks" is nominated by a committee of which Honestus is chairman, and his unsullied name is printed the next morning as indorsing political profligacy of the first water. Now, the moral Mr. Curtis offers is this: "It is necessary to begin as early in preparation for action as the rascals." And this is very excellent advice for a few famous writers and magnetic orators, whose special work it is to study public opinion, and to lead it. But, for the reasons I have given, the average over-worked citizen cannot acknowledge this immense claim upon his time and activity. Call him unpatriotic if you will: we must take human nature as we find it. We shall never secure the legitimate

influence of his character and good sense in politics until we remove the difficulties that at present beset him.

But I do not deny that I have power to influence nominations. Within certain limits, I have far more power than I ought to have. If I give a thousand-dollar check to be used in securing a special nomination, it will greatly conduce to that end. To be sure, I may be outbid by a corporation ready to give two thousand to place its legislator in office. Undoubtedly the managers sometimes find it for their advantage to supply a candidate who will strengthen their party by rallying the moral forces of the community. But this must always be the exception; for such a candidate will owe them no allegiance, and can never be used for their purposes.

Journalist. I was struck with a statement in the recently-published Diary of John Quincy Adams. At forty years of age, in the full tide of an honorable public career, he writes that he had never made a speech at a caucus or a town-

meeting, and that he did not think he ever should. Can any conspicuous office-holder at the present day say as much? — unless, indeed, he is a man of large wealth, who has paid other people to make speeches for him.

Senator. There is a great deal of cant talked about the influence of wealth upon legislation. Wealth means intelligence, — knowledge of using means to ends. In eight cases out of ten, the things that capitalists lobby for are really for the interest of the community. You may say truly, that the congressman from the adjoining district — a man who has the respect of the whole country — owes his election to the money that has been spent in carrying it. I answer, that the money could not have been spent more acceptably to the mass of the people.

Minister. Nevertheless, it would seem to be a somewhat shameful confession, that, if majorities are to be represented, a public-spirited minority must buy them the privilege.

Merchant. Several days ago, I happened to meet a gentleman who had just received a nomi-

nation for a political office to which no salary was attached. He told me, that, although he considered it his duty to accept any position where the people really wanted him, he did not feel bound to pay fifty dollars for the empty compliment of a nomination. He went on to remind me that this fifty dollars (under the name of an assessment for campaign-expenses) was the open and legitimate payment exacted from candidates even for such minor offices as city-alderman, or member of the lower house of the legislature. Of course, the possible, or, to speak more correctly, the probable, expenses of candidates must be reckoned at a much higher sum. If the office-seeker would have his name appear upon a second regular ticket, he must pay another fifty dollars for his improved prospects. If he hearkens to the solicitations of his "friends," who propose to print opposition tickets, with his name slyly inserted to cheat unwary voters, a check for fifty more dollars is the customary recognition of their tender concern for his interests. Now, let us leave out of

the account all payments made to managers who undertake to secure these fifty-dollar nominations. Let us even suppose that a candidate's expenses are confined to the necessary nomination-fee of a single caucus. Have we not found one of the reasons why the people are so often cheated of their right to be represented by able and disinterested men? Here is the question which, in theory, the community puts to its most valued members: *Will you oblige us by leaving your business to attend to ours, if a majority selects you as the man it especially trusts?* Here is the question of the managers' caucus: *Do you want an office enough to pay down fifty dollars on a gambling adventure for a chance of obtaining it?* I am sure that one hundred good men might be found who would answer the first question in the affirmative, where not ten good men would so answer the second.

Journalist. And you can add that the ten good men who might be possible candidates would be hampered by the fact that they had

been compelled to appear as office-*seekers*, and to make payments which acknowledged their obligations to managers and busybodies.

Senator. And then comes the unanswerable question: What are you going to do about it?

Journalist. When Mr. Mill was proposed as a candidate for Parliament, he expressed the wish that his supporters should make an individual appeal, by circular, to every elector, laying other names before him as well as his own, and requesting him to select from among them, or from others, the person or persons whom he wished to be brought forward as candidates.

Senator. For party-managers to issue a paper of this sort would be impracticable.

Journalist. I agree with you. But for the State to see that such documents were issued would not only be practicable, but in the direct line of those educational functions which it has assumed in America. Our costly machinery of public instruction, run in order that men may vote wisely, stops too soon. If you and I are burdened with heavy taxes in order that the

suffrage of our neighbors may not be ignorant suffrage, then we have a right to ask that the State will give them and us what we pay for, — the means of voting effectively and intelligently. If our elections were less frequent, we might with more reason call upon every elector to take an active part in them. If municipal and state officers were chosen for terms of three or four years, it would surely be easier to impress the citizen with a sense of his responsibility. It is worthy of note, that upon this matter there is a practical unanimity among American writers who have considered the subject of representation; and I am not aware that any of them have disputed the position of Mr. Mill, that every thing appertaining to the exercise of the franchise should be provided for by law and at the public cost. So far we are moving in thoughtful company. Let nominations, as well as elections, be recognized by our laws, and made under the supervision of public officers. Require that all ballots for nomination be signed by the voter, and

kept for reference. Yes, I have considered the objections that have been alleged against holding men responsible for votes. That the signed ballot might, in exceptional cases, disturb the perfect independence of the elector, must be admitted, though public opinion would go far towards preventing such abuse. But I am convinced that the poor and dependent man will always gain much more than he can lose by discouraging the secret combinations of cowards and knaves, who take instinctively to the dark. Observe, however, that no principle recognized by our present system is questioned. The caucus does not undertake to conceal the preferences of individual voters. There are four methods used for determining the sense of these meetings. 1st. Ballots, conspicuously printed, are handed to voters, which they deposit in a box in sight of all men. 2d. Voters are required to mark names upon a list which is under the vigilant inspection of a committee. 3d. Voters, by rising, or raising the hand, confirm or reject nominations

offered to the meeting. 4th. Voters propose the substitution of names upon a list presented for their acceptance. Neither of these methods secures secrecy of voting, while most of them give marked publicity to the electors' choice. Signed ballots for nominations would therefore violate no usage of our present system.

Merchant. But be more explicit. Here is this average town of X——, whose majority fails to be represented in government. Suppose you have your elections once in three years: what next?

Journalist. On the third year, about six weeks before the election, will appear the "Local Nominator," a journal published under the supervision of a committee chosen by the town, and distributed at every house, like the annual report. In this public journal, communications, indorsed with the names of voters, will propose candidates for any of the political parties, or candidates independent of any party. The paper will be issued weekly, say for four weeks. Here any elector will have a

right to be heard for or against any candidate, and here an expression of his conviction will have precisely the weight to which his reputation for judgment and integrity among his neighbors may entitle it. Such a journal would do just what the caucus does in theory, but never in practice. If I am an orator, and expert in dodging parliamentary gags, I may be heard for a few minutes by a squad of excited men who have come to a primary meeting with the purpose of controlling it. By means of the journal, I can show my convictions, with arguments to sustain them, to each elector in his coolest moments.

Senator. Does your scheme acknowledge the existence of parties?

Journalist. Undoubtedly: they are necessities of popular governments. Their platforms and proposed measures will reach the people through the general press, as at present. My "Local Nominator" will have nothing to do with these questions. The State has nothing to say concerning any party programme. It interferes

only to secure majorities the right and power to select the men who are to carry out the principles which are most acceptable at any given time. It has spent immense sums upon education to secure intelligent voting. It interferes to see that its benign intention is not defeated. Two weeks before election, polls for nominations will be opened in convenient parts of the town. They will be kept open for several days, in order that every elector may vote with a minimum of inconvenience. Every signed ballot designates the party candidate in whose favor it is to be counted; or the independent candidate, if one is preferred. The central committee will examine the ballots, and proclaim the names of the majority candidates for the parties, as well as those put forward as independent of party obligation. The matter is then to be left to general public discussion until the election.

Senator. Would you do away with all party conventions?

Journalist. Not necessarily. They would

be useful in discussing platforms, and promulgating the views of leading men. But I would have all nominations made through the agency just mentioned. Committees representing towns and wards of cities would, of course, send nominations received for State officers to a central council, through which the result would be made known.

Senator. Of course, you have considered the expense of this arrangement?

Journalist. I believe that the improved candidates we should get would save us ten times the outlay necessary to secure them. But consider the immense expense of our caucus system, — an expense which is finally borne, in one form or another, by the people. You know what it costs to be nominated for Congress. For an expense which is too often incurred in order to demoralize the people, I would substitute an expense that must always enlighten and educate them. At first, doubtless, a good many electors would want to make their preferences known in the columns

of the "Nominator;" and considerable type-setting might be required; but, as soon as the novelty wore off, the most trusted representatives of different classes of the community — working-men, professional men, capitalists, and reformers — would be permitted to speak briefly for their friends.

Senator. Are you simple enough to suppose that the managers could not devise means of capturing your State nominating invention as soon as it got well to work?

Journalist. I believe that the utterly unscrupulous trading politicians are, after all, few in number. A large class of men who consort with them, and are used by them, are very decent folk, of average character, and perhaps more than average public spirit. They feel that they have a right to some political influence, and to a chance at the offices. They adopt underhand ways of attaining their ends, because none others are possible. Give them their just measure of influence by legitimate means, and they will discountenance a resort

to any other. I believe that public opinion will insist upon fair play whenever it is clear that an opportunity for it has been provided.

Minister. If I understand your position, it is this: Instead of speculating about new theories of representation, which the mass of our people are not likely to understand, and which interested politicians can easily misrepresent, we should cling stoutly to the old theory, demanding only that it be reduced to practice.

Journalist. You are quite right. I suggest no startling innovation, like Senator Doolittle's recent proposal to give heads of families two votes. Why should we abandon the familiar democratic principles which have a century at their back? Our work is, not to destroy, but to fulfil. We are only called upon to see that our methods of representation are improved — as the methods of conducting all sorts of private business have been improved — to meet the changed conditions of modern life. Protect majorities in their right to nominate, as well as to elect, and we hear less of the

merits of double voting, and of the other radical changes in our system which enthusiasts have proposed. In theory, the caucus is unassailable. What can be more desirable than a consultation of all citizens holding similar political views for the purpose of nominating candidates after full and free discussion? In practice, we know it has come to pass that the higher capacity and morality of our communities are deprived of their just weight. Candidates represent, not the will of the majority, but the tyranny of an active and unscrupulous minority. To return to my former illustration, we are getting about as satisfactory results from the caucus as we should get from a jury-trial, if the protection of the judge were withdrawn, and the jurymen were allowed to be absent from court whenever their convenience might prompt. Take my remedy in a single proposition. Let the State, which cannot bring the citizen to the existing caucus, bring an honest caucus to every citizen.

Merchant. You assume that all our States

will one day be blessed with our wise Massachusetts law, which excludes illiterate persons from the suffrage.

Journalist. Either such a law, or compulsory education, we must all have, sooner or later. For a community, which deems it a duty to set up free school-houses at every corner, to grant the suffrage to those who refuse to get learning enough to read the newspaper, and sign their names, is an outrage upon common sense. It is not democracy, but a burlesque upon democracy.

Minister. I have often thought of the intelligent mechanics, — some of our best citizens here in X——, — who live two miles from the town-hall, and cannot afford to keep carriages. It is preposterous to expect these men, tired with their day's work, to trudge to a caucus on the ghost of a chance of opposing the combinations of skilful and fluent managers. The fact, too, that caucuses for the nomination of most important officers are adroitly held the evening before the election, cuts off all hope

of opposing their decrees. Voters who can be bribed or bought are a very small minority. But then they can always be had, if wanted. Somebody stands ready to pay *their* carriage hire if they live beyond walking distance. There is food for reflection here.

Journalist. Let me offer more food for reflection. Consider our clergy. Here are you ministers, who undoubtedly represent the higher intelligence and morality of this town. In most schemes for its improvement, for raising its social tone, you come forward and do your full part. None know better how supremely important it is for the moral welfare of our people that faithful and high-minded men should represent them in government. And yet you exercise no more influence upon the political decisions of our community than the paupers and lunatics in the almshouse. I know your excuse. If you consort with the men who control nominations, if you adopt the underhand methods by which they are secured, you must lose the influence of characters above suspicion

upon which your usefulness depends. I fear, that, at present, the excuse is valid; but I deny that democracy is responsible for abuses that minorities are permitted to perpetrate in its name. The State has only to see that the people really have the rights it nominally accords them, and we shall make it far more discreditable for a minister to be out of politics than it is now to be in them.

Senator. But would it not take too much time for a busy man to throw the weight of his influence through the public journal you advocate?

Journalist. Let us see. The Reverend Mr. Greatheart has finished his sermon; and, before the ink is dry, he writes for the "Nominator" a communication like this:—

> I shall vote for Hon. Daniel Darenotlie as nominee for representative to Congress for the Free-Trade party. Among the candidates proposed for nomination by the Protectionists in the last number of this journal, I find the name of Colonel Trusty. If their policy must prevail, this district could have no better representative. CHARLES GREATHEART.

Mr. Probity is a well-known and respected mechanic, who, for the excellent reasons that our friend has given, is never to be seen at caucuses. But a man who will not trudge two miles on the ghost of a chance of opposing the combinations of skilful and fluent managers will put the weight of his honest conviction into such sentences as these: —

> As a laboring-man and a Democrat, I propose Henry Homespun as the nominee of the Democratic party for representative to the General Court, and shall give him my vote. Let any laboring-men, who are bound to vote the Republican ticket, see that the name of Louis Laudable is on it. He is an honest man, just to all interests, and afraid of nobody: witness his report on factories two years ago. Don't throw away votes on a Labor-party nomination, as some agitators are asking you to do. The time for this has not come. Stick to the old parties, and see that they nominate their best men. PETER PROBITY.

I claim that Greatheart and Probity have now obtained that legitimate ascendency of character in a political decision which they have always exercised in social decisions. Who does not

recognize the fact, that the good opinion of one man is a force, while that of his neighbor has not a feather's weight? By a few strokes of the pen, Greatheart addresses two unpacked caucuses of rival parties, and contributes the weight of his judgment to their deliberations. Probity has been heard in three full party caucuses, as well as by those citizens who recognize no party obligation. He has suffered no disadvantage from the fact, that a faithful workingman cannot command the arts by which a practised and unscrupulous rhetorician may, for the time, sway a popular assembly. Two hundred years ago, Thomas Hobbes flung his bitterest sarcasm at democracy by declaring that it was only another name for an aristocracy of orators. With our free education and free libraries, this reproach should surely be removed. It is time to enter upon a course, that, in fulness of time, may make democracy synonymous with an aristocracy of character and capacity.

Do not take the illustrations just given for more than they are worth. Few citizens might

care to designate candidates for parties with whose policy they did not sympathize. In exceptional instances, certainly, an opportunity to do this would be desirable. I may be conscientiously opposed to the doctrine of free-trade, and yet highly value Greatheart's judgment touching the protectionist whose general character would do most honor to the district. The "Nominator" represents a perfectly fair deliberative body, where the humblest person has the power to influence others, as well as the right to be influenced by those whose intelligence he respects. Office-seekers are, of course, heartily welcome; but they must leave their game of packing conventions, and, appearing before the people on their merits, openly solicit their votes. Notwithstanding the dictum of a great philosopher, it is by no means certain that the proper person to be intrusted with political power is he who is least willing to accept it. Many persons are honorably ambitious of filling public offices who fill them exceedingly well.

Senator. Your plan would scarcely improve

matters in cities. In small communities, where a man is well known among his neighbors, his influence may be in proportion to his worth; but in a city we may not have bowing acquaintance with the residents of the next block.

Journalist. I might answer, that it would be of great advantage to cities if towns could be represented in legislatures by their most trustworthy men. The higher standard of public service would inevitably diffuse itself. But I cannot agree that a guarantee of absolutely fair play in nominating to office would work no improvement. Remember that in all cities there are conspicuous men, who, though unknown to the majority of their neighbors as personal acquaintances, are well known by their honorable reputations. Take, as examples, a dozen leading clergymen of different denominations, the leading scientists, the special students of politics in the nobler sense of the word, the organizers of successful charities, citizens who have acquired wealth by exceptional business sagacity. Here are the natural leaders of opinion, exerting wide

influence in directions religious, scientific, and social, who seldom appear at caucuses, and exert no influence whatever upon their nominations. But make the conditions of influence easy, open, and honorable, and we shall feel the weight of their judgment in government, as we now feel it in interests of far less importance.

Minister. If it is the duty of government to insure honest nominations, should it not do something to secure honest elections? Why should the polls be surrounded by a crowd of roughs, hired in the interest of candidates to force tickets with false headings, and otherwise got up to cheat, upon unwary voters? They might, with as much propriety, be permitted to assail jurymen as they enter the court to render their verdict.

Journalist. You are quite right. It is clearly the duty of the State, acting in the interest of all citizens, to see that voters are treated in such decent fashion as shall encourage their self-respect, and give reality to their electorial rights. The regular party tickets, and such independent

tickets as have a certain numerical support, should be conspicuously displayed in the voting-room, and corresponding ballots obtained on application to proper officers. These should be printed at the public expense, in a uniform manner, with ample spaces between the names to facilitate scratching when desired. Writing materials should likewise be provided for all who may wish to amend existing tickets, or to prepare new ones. It should be assumed, that, when the citizen enters the voting-room, he comes to register an opinion already formed. Idlers and busy-bodies should not be permitted to interfere with him, or obstruct his passage.

Senator. You must admit that a genuine manifestation of the wishes of the majority might, in some cases, give us worse public servants than the managers provide at present.

Minister. Possibly worse in rare cases, but in no case so dangerous. To assure us that an inferior man is really the deliberate preference of the majority, is to give just that determinateness to a problem which challenges good men to

attempt its solution. Take this very congressional district. Shall I seriously try to persuade a majority of its voters that a man of spotless national reputation, like Steadfast, would represent us far more creditably than Bubble or Feigning? Why, everybody admits it; the managers themselves admit it. They can only say that Bubble is "inside of politics;" that they are bound to recognize his "claims" just as he is bound to recognize theirs; and that it has been "arranged" that he is to represent us for two terms, and that Feigning is to have the succession. Once assure me that a majority of voters in this district honestly believe that the qualities of Bubble are more desirable in our representative than those of Steadfast, and I shall have something to tilt against. I should hope, by my preaching and living, to clear the mists from my neighbors' eyes, and bring them to a better judgment. Now, I can do nothing; for I can find no ignorance to enlighten.

Journalist. If it is the real wish of the majority to be represented by dishonest and incapa-

ble men, the fact is wórth proving; but, until it is proved, by giving the majority adequate protection from the tricks and sharp practices of minorities, I am too good a democrat to believe it. Provisionally at least, I repudiate the doctrine that the legislator must necessarily represent the average ignorance of political science which may exist among his constituents. As well say that the trusted physician must have as crude notions of physiology as his patients, or that the honored minister must be just as selfish and worldly as the average pewholder.

While it is a matter of serious concern that so many men of high intelligence and sturdy character are virtually disfranchised by the caucus system, it is no less unfortunate that the great body of laboring-men are nearly as powerless in the hands of the managers. Our social organization, which has experienced so great changes in the past, is destined to profound modifications in the future. Whether these shall come about violently or gradually, whether we shall rise to a nobler civilization, or pass into a period

of chaos, depends upon the adequate representation of the working-classes. Plato has significantly told us that each Grecian state enclosed two states, — one composed of the rich, the other of the poor. Our American States are coming to be divided in the same way; and, under the management of caucus politicians, the dividing-line will be constantly deepening. Manual labor has no adequate representation in our government. The vulgar money powers and knavish combinations which hold sway in the caucus have too often offered the working-man just that choice which the old epigram distinguishes between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. He is graciously permitted to suit his fancy about the termination, seeing that Tweed element can in no wise be avoided. Do not understand me to imply that the working-man must be represented by his fellow-laborer. No one who depends upon daily manual work for his bread can afford to take a political office. Not until the working-man has acquired some capital, and with it the leisure for reflection and investiga-

tion, can he be put forward to represent his class; and then, unlucky paradox! his interests no longer identify him with that class. Yet it is well that this is so. In the last analysis, we shall always find that the real and permanent interest of any class is identical with the real and permanent interest of all classes. If labor is to be adequately represented, it must be by *culture:* the word, despite its savor of dilettanteism, is the best that occurs to me. Men of independent thought, thorough instruction, and high morality, are the natural allies of the humble and the wronged; but such men are as worthless to the managers as they are precious to the people.

Senator. Let me remind you how hopeless is any movement in the direction you advocate. Why, you are met at once by the paradox, that a reform which is only possible through the action of legislatures must be carried against legislatures. The existing system has created the tribunal by which it must be tried. That a change of method in nominating would be

thoroughly democratic, giving reality to the alleged government by the people, is just the objection to its success. Why, look at the fate of the proposition to abolish that absurd restriction which limits the choice of electors to a resident of their own district. Is there any person outside of politics, and outside a mad-house, who desires a law to forbid him from employing a worthy man, whether as blacksmith, doctor, or legislator, because he lives in an adjoining town, or perhaps across the street in the next ward? And yet, when it was proposed to submit the wisdom of this restriction to a popular ballot, the so-called popular branch of our Massachusetts legislature would listen to no discussion, but "voted it down with a howl," as the saying goes. Remember that men who owe their places to a given abuse will never bestir themselves to get rid of it. If a plausible cry is wanted against your State guarantee for fair nominations, an appeal can always be made to that horror of enlarging the sphere of government which is the nightmare of so many excellent persons.

Journalist. The non-intervention-of-government cry would be too shallow to have much effect. To see that the people get information that will enable them to judge independently, — in other words, to protect the majority, so that it may exercise free choice among a variety of proffered alternatives, — is so clearly within the sphere of a popular government, that, to deny it, is to deny the right of such a government to exist at all. Even Mr. Mill, who advocated State inaction in moral matters to a degree which seems to me erroneous, never doubted that this sort of supervision was one of its first duties. Neither can I see that the heavy logical fetters, with which Mr. Herbert Spencer sees fit to load the representative of organized society, can prevent a government, founded on the will of the people, from taking action necessary to reflect that will with a maximum of accuracy. Or suppose we all accept the proposition attributed to Jefferson, that the country is best governed which is governed least, surely the people should be protected in their right to choose these least-

governing governors if they really want them. I submit that these considerations should satisfy the "thinkers," who must have logical completeness in many cases where their humbler brothers rely upon a vigorous common sense. Most active men have come to the conclusion that the functions of government are precisely what public opinion decrees that they should be at any given time, and that they are likely to increase as civilization advances.

What you say about legislatures has, of course, pertinence. Still, it must be remembered that some good men get into them under our present system. The exigencies of parties compel the managers to consent to the nomination of a few candidates who really represent the people, and are competent to do good work that may be credited to the party with which their fortunes are linked. Few as these men are, and false as is the position in which they are placed, they constitute a latent power ready to respond to a movement that may emancipate them from a thraldom they have learned to detest. The

restriction of residence to which you allude is no doubt absurd enough; but, until majorities are secured the privilege of nominating within their own districts, public sentiment will scarcely call for this important enlargement of their rights. Other reforms, it seems to me, must wait for this.

The demand for woman suffrage, for example, will receive a consideration which it has not yet obtained, whenever it is evident that a majority of men is fairly represented in legislation. "I always feel, when I put my hand in the ballot-box," said a president of Harvard College, "that I am being *used* by somebody, I know not whom, for some purpose, I know not what." Men who have reached such conclusions cannot feel a burning enthusiasm that their wives and daughters should be used also. Whenever the instincts of men are adequately represented in the choice of legislators, we shall not exclude the instincts of women, if it shall appear that a majority of them desire to vote. But to enlarge the suffrage with our present system of caucus

nominations would be to play into the hands of our most unscrupulous political adventurers, — a fact which certain prominent members of that fraternity have been sagacious enough to recognize.

A truer representation of majorities is, then, the reform of reforms. The State should see that her voters are permitted to avail themselves of the natural leadership of the enlightened and humane, and are not bought and sold and bargained for by the cunning and adroit. Let us celebrate our National Centennial by initiating a public sentiment that shall finally bury King Caucus by the side of His Majesty George the Third, with a "*Sic semper tyrannis*" by way of epitaph.

COERCION IN THE LATER STAGES OF EDUCATION.

1873.

THERE is a familiar Latin line which makes summary disposition of those unscrupulous persons who have presumed to say our good things before us. But a comprehensive form of anathema, to be directed against those who say our good things *after* us, is still a desideratum. Until this great deficiency has been supplied, men should possess their souls in patience. And so, when we read in our newspaper that the learned court has pronounced a decision of immense wisdom, and of unspeakable importance to the nation, it is well to join with the general acclamation over the bench of Daniels that Heaven has sent us. But it is not well to forget the patient laborers at anonymous journalism who anticipated that enlightened judgment by some score of years, and fortified it with arguments

which the gentlemen in authority have at length done them the honor to adopt.

More years ago than it is quite pleasant to specify, a few persons of my acquaintance made an exhaustive examination of a certain American college. As we had determined to do our work thoroughly, you will understand that we avoided the blunder of getting letters of introduction to official personages, and inspecting only what they chose to show us. We happened to hit upon the very plan which has since been adopted by Mr. Greenwood, the amateur casual, as well as by the "Tribune" reporter, who feigned madness in order to examine the workings of an asylum from the inside. We caused ourselves to be put into the institution that we desired to inspect. You will see that we must have been pretty clever fellows to have staid there four years without getting found out; but the prospect of being able to form intelligent opinions upon all disputed points connected with college education furnished a stimulus for our best effort. Well, much other business has since

engaged the members of that committee; and somehow it has happened, that the report of our investigations has never been published in full. But, heartily concurring in its general conclusions, we have all held certain decided views about college-matters, for the acceptance of which — according to our private capacities and opportunities — we have endeavored to prepare the world. And at length the hour has struck. In his last Annual Report, the President of Harvard College ventures upon an observation which has long been a commonplace among many persons who have tried to understand the requirements of the later education in America.

With due official caution, President Eliot finds it "not unreasonable to hope" that the venerable institution of which he has proved so efficient a head "will soon get entirely rid of a certain school-boy spirit, which is not found in the professional schools, and which seems to have its roots in the enforced attendance upon recitations, lectures, and religious exercises." And after speaking of the practice of foreign univer-

sities, and of the average age of admission to Harvard, a notable paragraph is closed with this sentence: "Whenever it appears that a college rule or method of general application is persevered in only for the sake of the least promising and worthy students, there is good reason to suspect that that rule or method has been outgrown." Sound as this concluding proposition undoubtedly is, it seems to contain an implication from which many would dissent. It is my own conviction, that, while the reform indicated would undoubtedly be profitable for the best scholars, it would be still more advantageous for "the least promising and worthy students" *who should be allowed to enter, or permitted to remain in, our highest institutions for education.* The statement is here limited by the conditions italicized, out of respect to the clear and earnest presentation of opposing views by the President of Princeton College, whose letter, evoked by President Eliot's remarks, is familiar to all who follow our educational literature. We have no need, then, to consider that conviction of certain

eminent minds, which found expression in the assertion of Adam Smith, that "after twelve or thirteen years, provided the master does his duty, force or restraint can scarce ever be necessary to carry on any part of education." We need not meddle with the question, how far coercive institutions, such as Dr. McCosh approves, may be suited to large numbers of American youth. It is enough to assert that there is a very respectable class, both in number and intelligence, to whose needs they are not adapted. Let us have coercive seminaries, so far as may be required. Let them be called high schools, academies, colleges, or what you please: it is foolish to wrangle over names. But, in addition to these, let us have at least one educational centre, whose methods are essentially different. The time is ripe for an American university that shall worthily represent the highest intellectual life of the nation. To secure this, some temporary inconveniences, and some risks of partial failure, may be well encountered. Even the statistical and popular

success dear to catalogue-makers may be wisely perilled in securing a higher level for future effort. Ultimate recognition commanded by broadest usefulness will surely be given, if the proverb is boldly reversed, and no *corpus vile* taken for the experiment.

How far our national centre of the highest knowledge should be formed after a foreign model is a matter for discussion. It may be remarked, that Dr. McCosh's estimate of the German university, whose imitation he seems to deprecate, is quite cordial enough. "Berlin," he tells us, "with its two hundred teachers, can furnish high instruction in every department of human learning. It is the very place for an American youth to go, when, having taken his degree at home, he wishes to perfect himself in some special department of human learning." If we give its full meaning to this last sentence, — a meaning that it may not have been intended to convey, — we touch the rooted conviction upon which advocates of nobler standards in our home education base their demands; for it is

emphatically denied that any European capital is "the very place for an American youth to go" during the most critical period of his development. There is always peril in sending young men beyond the reach of the moral sentiment of their nationality. Its subtle influence is wanted to lend strength to the feeble will, and to separate right from wrong by sharp outlines. It is humiliating to reflect how much the best of us are indebted for our good conduct to the wholesome public opinion in the presence of which we expect to live. Those who know the temptations of student life in the Continental cities long for the day when our university education at home will leave no pretext for this dangerous expatriation.

But it is not the German university as it exists in Europe, but that university improved, and adapted to our wants by strict periodical examinations, whose claims have found advocates. And here is thrust forward the evil of cramming, that examinations are alleged to induce. It is difficult for many persons of mature life to look at this objection judicially, from the

fact that a large portion of their own college examinations were passed by cramming; and this, perhaps, by the connivance of those who directed them. The causes of this ancient deception are not far to seek. Marks for recitations were considered adequate tests of scholarship, and examinations were degraded to exhibitions. The teacher — whether owing to his own fault, or to that of the system in which he was obliged to work — was unwilling that the true results of his course should appear. It was, perhaps, thought desirable that a given institution should be kept on a numerical equality with some rival; or it seemed best that certain youths of idle habits, who could command powerful social influences, should not be disgraced. But, whatever may have been the motives, there can be no doubt of the fact that examinations were often arranged with the special design of giving crammers a chance. And I do not exceed the bounds of my personal knowledge in mentioning that college teachers have sometimes given their pupils very broad hints how and where to

cram in order to make a show. But whatever abuses have existed in the past, or exist to-day, few who have considered the matter can doubt that examinations may be made tests of proficiency as nearly absolute as humanity can devise. They can be made to indicate the amount of knowledge that the mind has assimilated far more truly than any average of marks for parrot-like recitations from a text-book. In a report upon the civil-service examination, published in England in 1854, and bearing the signatures of such men as Lord Macaulay, Professor Jowett, and Mr. Shaw Lefevre, occurs this emphatic declaration: "Experience justifies us in pronouncing, that, if the examiners be well chosen, it is utterly impossible that the delusive show of knowledge, which is the effect of the process popularly called cramming, can ever be successful against real learning and ability." Even Dr. McCosh frankly admits that examinations can be so arranged as to render cramming impossible, but thinks that not one examiner in ten is capable of devising them. Although many experts

totally differ with him in that estimate, the matter is worth no controversy. Suppose that only one examiner in twenty can prevent this fraud, the reply is obvious: "Let our national university employ the twentieth man."

Two other objections of Dr. McCosh deserve a passing remark. "Everybody knows," he says, "that many young men enter college without any appreciation of study; and the college should seek to give them a taste for learning by requiring them to come into daily contact with kind and judicious instructors." Owing to the defective state of our preparatory schools, and the easy conditions for admission to many colleges, the first clause in the sentence is, unhappily, true; but it scarcely touches President Eliot's hopes for the future. Indeed, it may be confidently affirmed, that, if the examination-papers published by Harvard College represent the *real* requirements for admission, it is impossible for applicants to enter without a decided "appreciation of study." That "the college should seek to give them a taste for learning" is

a self-evident proposition. I believe that this should be done by inducing sympathetic contact "with kind and judicious instructors." Whether this is best accomplished by *compelling* daily contact with them, is precisely the question in debate.

And, finally, Dr. McCosh implies that temptations to idleness and dissipation are counteracted by the coercive system at present in vogue in our highest colleges. If this were true, it should at once settle the question. There is a sadder necrology to every college than that which gets published upon Commencement Day. The failure of what we call our best education to obtain mastery over the vicious tendencies of humanity is sorrowfully evident. We will cheerfully resign, as a poor dilettante delight, all hope of developing our choice intellects by finer methods, if it can be shown that the old system will insure us one self-controlled democrat the more, or one pilfering congressman the less. It would indeed be a fool's bargain to abate a jot from the average moral character an institution develops, to furnish knowledge in encyclopedic

rations. But it is emphatically denied that an enforced attendance upon a few daily exercises, and the ranking by recitation-marks, which belongs to the scheme, have any tendency to prevent dissipation in young men who would otherwise seek it. The wretched pretence of school-boy espionage — which, under college conditions, can be only a pretence — induces a school-boy sense of fun in outwitting the shallow device. The collection of hundreds of young men in a university town must necessarily offer temptations to dissipation that no compulsions practicable to professors can appreciably reduce. But it is confidently maintained, that, in the case of students who are properly qualified for collegiate training, these temptations may be reduced to a minimum by lifting the relation of teacher and pupil to a higher level. The attractions to sin must be met by those attractions to intellectual and moral effort which the genuine professor, when left to himself, can bountifully supply. We are bound to distrust our ways of conducting the later education until a hearty

co-operation in the purposes of college-residence, instead of being the peculiarity of a minority, has become the pervading spirit of all.

But the root of the disorder, which, more or less apparently, results from the coercive system, is seldom honestly declared. It lies in the incompetence of the best professors for administrative duties. It is painful to think how many men of noble gifts have been compelled to waste power in the blundering performance of work that should never have been required of them. The eyeless Samson making sport for the Philistines is the prototype of men of rarer strength, obliged to fumble blindly before discordant classes who were brimming over with that merry sense of incongruity with which youth is so generously endowed. We are slowly learning that capital can never be forced into a given employment without being forced out of some other employment, and that it seeks spontaneously its most profitable field. That costliest capital, the genius and knowledge of a great teacher, is subject to similar laws. You cannot put it to un-

suitable work without deadening power in its proper range, and depriving its possessor of that lever of personality by which he might move a generation. It is needless to say that a teacher in an institution for the later education needs far other qualities than are essential for the successful master of a school. If the latter be a man of good character, a student of human nature, and versed in certain technicalities of his art, it is not necessary that he should possess much more knowledge than he is called upon to communicate. But the university renders its peculiar service to the community by collecting men of the highest standard of attainment. The true college professor is never a pedagogue, but always a student. He lives in the high atmosphere of his science, whether it be moral, speculative, or exact. He comes to his classroom fresh from the investigation of a great subject, and filled with enthusiasm for further knowledge of it; and it is by the atmosphere he brings with him that the minds of his pupils must be invigorated. The school and the college

are parts of one system, and must improve or degenerate together. It is by compelling the professor to attempt work which he must do poorly, but which might have been *well* done at school, that his office is hampered and belittled. The position which is false for a college instructor is the true one for the master of a school. His sphere is not, or should not be, so large as to preclude the constant oversight of those submitted to his care. He deals with boys who know that they are boys. To him belongs the authority of the parent; to the professor, the guidance, by example and counsel, of the elder brother. When I think of the amiable and eminent men with whom, as a college student, I was brought in contact, it is difficult to speak with patience of a system which seemed devised to deprive them of just the conditions in which they might have been magnetic. They stood before us in the fetters of a malign enchantment. Here were men capable of filling the offices of guide, philosopher, and friend, after far higher standards than Pope ever fancied; and some

perverse fairy was permitted to neutralize their powers by thrusting upon them the additional function of policeman. It is needless to say that this monstrous combination prevented the greater professors from filling with efficiency their rightful office. The awkward attempts at discipline which they were forced to make kept them in relations of petty antagonism with minds that would have yielded readily to their higher influence. The true order of college precedence was reversed. An inferior order of teachers, who were not above the work of turning the compulsory crank, seemed to have an advantage over wiser and better men, who could not be used for the ignoble business. The managers insisted upon doubling the parts of Pyramus and the Lion; but it was only Nick Bottom who rushed forward in jubilant readiness to discharge both.

Of priceless value to the nation are the high-minded and studious men, who, from time to time, fill chairs in our best colleges. They are indeed ignorant of the arts of money-getting,

and unacquainted with phases of unregenerate human nature of which the man of affairs has daily experience. Never having been more than one-half boy, — and that the best half, — they find it difficult to comprehend the whimsical codes that fetter the average college-student, and have sometimes queerest notions of the laws of evidence. Put one of these men to his right work, and his worth is incalculable. Compel him to be judge, jury, and executioner, among those who are passing through the most sensitive age known to mortals, and you have left nothing undone to reduce his powers to their meanest minimum.

While advocating the voluntary system under the conditions already specified, I certainly do not claim, that, when it is first tried, its success will seem very striking. From what may be a prudent deference to the doubts of respected educators like Dr. McCosh, the outgrown principle cannot at once be thoroughly abandoned, nor the better one honestly enforced. Against the crude and reckless application of reform,

which wise reformers should be the first to deprecate, we have a guarantee in the character of the men who direct our institutions for the later education. No change can instantly penetrate the inner life of a college, and show the gain it may ultimately produce. Those in authority will proceed little by little, with the view of testing alleged improvements by positive and definite experiments; and they are right in doing so. But it must never be forgotten, that the lingering consequences of regulations partially repealed allow only hazy indications of results that might follow their total abrogation. Some time must elapse before those indefinable influences which constitute a moral climate can make themselves felt.

But, when the period of probation is passed, — and marks and compulsions, and personal competitions, have been consigned to their place among provisional methods in the higher training, — I believe that recitations (if daily instructions are still called by that name) may be made so interesting, and evidently helpful to

the student, that the wish to avoid them will be unknown. The sentiments with which many have regarded the college recitation, as they knew it, were not wholly without justification. Four-fifths of it were useless to students who had mastered the prescribed lesson. Yet all were obliged to sit, hour after hour, upon painful benches, to hear those who would not study stumble over simplest passages, or dodge the very obvious snares that the professor was forced to set for them. And, unhappily, the passive protests against the system, which the true teachers could not be restrained from making, sometimes served to intensify its inherent mischiefs. There was Professor ——, for instance, who taught a science that I will call political economy, and who possessed every personal requisite for giving the highest intellectual guidance. The winning sunshine diffused by the presence of that thoughtful and inquiring teacher can never fade from the memories of those who have felt its influence. Left to his own reasonable methods, how perfectly would he have per-

sonified that element of kindly justness in opinion which commands the allegiance of young persons! But the energy of this man was lowered and absorbed by the fetters in which he was required to work. He was incapable of playing the captious pedagogue, expert in tripping dunces. Students were permitted to keep their text-books open in his recitation-room, and were called upon in regular sequence. But habits created by customary arrangements were not to be changed by this covert repudiation of the principle upon which they rested. The recitation was still *for marks;* and these were to be obtained, not by a general comprehension of the science, but by memorizing those few passages of a text-book upon which each was to exhibit. But suppose this gifted teacher had been permitted to substitute his own electric forces for the dull mechanical ones by which he was forced to grind out certain results! If I venture to put in words the persuasions that might have inaugurated a free intercourse with his classes, it must be remembered that no type can

represent the gentle tones that would have filled them with abounding power: —

"We have come together, young gentlemen, to pursue some studies in political economy. We shall use Mr. Mill's work as a text-book; but, in connection with it, I shall, from time to time, advise you to read portions of the works of other authors. By a free interchange of question and reply, we shall make our study interesting. Some of the forms of the old recitation we shall find it well to retain. From time to time, I shall ask those who are willing to be called upon to give in their own language the results of our reading and conversations. I may answer a question about the examinations that are to be passed at the end of the term by saying that I have nothing to do with them. For a statement of what will be required, together with the penalties for failure, I refer you to the regulations issued by the business managers of this institution. I will mention only that these examinations are minute, and will be conducted chiefly in writing. They will thoroughly test

your real knowledge of the subject of our study by evidence as nearly infallible as the experience of experts can devise. But let this be the last word or thought we give to them. We have only to feel the interest and value of the science as it opens before us; and we need trouble ourselves as little about the tests of the examiners as the wise man is concerned about the ways in which the world will find him out."

But, however confident we may be that there is no surer way of promoting honor and self-control among a good class of young men than by assuming these qualities to exist, it is certainly true that some restraining machinery must be kept ready for action where large numbers are brought together. If the bolts of discipline are not to be thrown by the weak and erring hands of literary professors, to what power should they properly be confided? I answer, The laws of the land for the protection of person and of property, and for the correction of lawlessness and vice, should be enforced by the business managers of the university. Any police

force found necessary to protect buildings and grounds should be provided. A salaried law-officer should be employed by the council of directors to protect the interests of their trust by the methods known to his craft. It should be clearly understood, that the outrageous assaults that are sometimes committed under the name of "hazing" would be submitted to the investigation and punishment of the courts. The crime of endangering property and life by bonfires or otherwise should be prosecuted by a vigilant attorney. Offences which the law cannot restrain (and these are fewer than might be supposed) should be reported to the council of directors, to be dealt with by warning or expulsion, as should seem best. But, these forces existing, they would rarely or never be called into action against young men who had learned how to study, and, in their daily intercourse with their teachers, were gaining that invaluable part of education which comes through independent, responsible action.

The administration of discipline by instruct-

ors in the highest education is so admirably treated by President Venable of the University of Virginia, that little can be added to a citation of his remarks: "I have seen the plan of trusting to the students' honor and of the abolition of all espionage tested here and in the University of South Carolina. It has also been adopted in most of the Virginia colleges with the best results. Its effects in imbuing the body of the students with the spirit of truth and candor, in giving them the proper scorn for a lie, and in promoting a frank and manly intercourse between the students and professors, cannot be too highly estimated. A student who is known to have been guilty of a violation of his examination-pledge, or of any other falsehood in his dealings with the authorities (things of rare occurrence), is not permitted by his fellows to remain in the institution. I believe, that, if this system of trust and confidence were adopted in all the colleges in the land, it would prove an inestimable blessing to our country in inculcating manliness, truth, and integrity upon our

future rulers." The good advice with which, on many occasions, Massachusetts has favored Virginia, is handsomely repaid in these wise and suggestive words.

Compulsory attendance at daily religious worship seems to lack all logical justification in an American university. One party of sensible and good men will tell you that compulsory college prayers are the master-device of Satan for killing all real devotion in the human breast. On the other hand, persons of equal excellence protest against any form of education which lacks this daily recognition of the religious obligations of man. While these utterly conflicting views exist, it seems to me impossible that a great university, open to all persons and respecting all consciences, should pronounce judgment in the matter. While opportunities for attending public worship should be furnished, the obligation to attend them should be enforced by the signal guardian of the minor student. It is a responsibility that belongs to parents, and which, two for the good of all parties, they should not be

permitted to shirk. As testimony to the fact of attendance upon divine service, I venture to say that there is not one parent in a thousand who would hesitate to take the word of the son he is supporting at college. The censure or penalty for remissness in this duty — if it were regarded as a duty — should be left in his hands.

But, while insisting that mental culture should be the sole end of university *requirements*, I yield to no one in the belief of its inadequacy to secure a complete and healthy manhood. An ability to stand bravely in a minority, a love of truth that shall weigh lightly all earthly advantages, — these are the gifts of a high and reverent faith. That "purification" from natural and acquired sin which Plato considered the essential of human worth is likewise the first requirement of Christianity. The solemn cry of the Psalmist, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" every individual is bound to answer at his peril, and as wisely as he may. It is doubted only whether this question can be wisely answered by the formal cur-

lations of a secular corporation constituted for other purposes. The University of Virginia does not exact attendance upon daily religious services; and its president gives important and gratifying testimony to the good results of this liberality. When any considerable number of persons demand for a portion of the students of a university instruction and oversight conformable with a special mode of religious belief, the foundation of different halls or homes will meet their wishes. The occupants of these institutions may, of course, be subjected to such supervisions and compulsions as their supporters approve.

I have thus specified some of the conditions which men of radical thought believe an institution for the later education should fulfil. The university should gradually abandon its petty coercions and petty competitions, and represent in the highest sense that "community" which was signified by the mediæval use of the word. The well-known law in mechanics, by which two forces not in the same direction may be

replaced by a single force, is potent in the immaterial world. We look back with something like incredulity to the time when college instructors administered corporal chastisement upon refractory students. It is difficult to believe, that, less than a century ago, those appointed to minister to minds diseased could think of no better sedatives than the fetter and the lash. Another generation may look upon existing relationships between teacher and taught in the later stages of education as scarcely less false and demoralizing. For what Bacon has said of philosophers is equally applicable to a too commonly accepted status of college professors: "They are stars which give little light, because they are so high." The student is encouraged to look upon himself as a victim, and upon his tutor as a licensed executioner, and seeks his revenge in a whispered gibe or doubtful epigram. It is time that the miserable game of thrust-and-parry, played between the crammers and the crammed, should give place to a nobler relation. The utmost skill of the great professor will always

lie in the simple truth of the science his own labor has created or enlarged. An institution will attract such men — nay, it may be said to *create* them — by providing them with congenial work. The university that best knows how to use these rare teachers — men of sensitive and highly-refined organizations — may claim to be *national* in the noblest sense of that much-abused adjective. Such a metropolis of learning, where the highest American culture may thrive under the most fitting conditions, it is to be hoped, is not far from us. Its advent will fill with intellectual ambition many who have not yet felt such stimulus. Confining its benefactions to the divine gifts of liberty and opportunity, it will cause a normal expansion of that mental power so greatly needed to cope with the complex problems our democracy is thrusting upon us. In better ways than by exacting prayers and praises from reluctant youths will the great university honor Him "whose service is perfect freedom."

THE FUNCTION OF TOWN LIBRARIES.

THIS is a one-sided paper. Something might be said on the other side; but, as that is the popular side, it is likely to receive full justice. In behalf of an unconverted minority, who should be represented through the press, if nowhere else, I desire to register a dissent from the prevailing opinion concerning the function of libraries sustained by the taxation of towns and small municipalities. The importance of stimulating thought upon subjects bearing ever so remotely upon our fiscal requirements, I conceive to be far greater than may superficially appear. For when the mass of our people clearly comprehend what government should not be called upon to do for them, they will insist upon its performing duties which are manifestly within its sphere of ac-

tion. Laboring men and women are to-day suffering from the adulteration of their food and drink, and from a system of taxation which oppresses them with weighty and unjust burdens. Their deliverance can only come by dismissing legislators who are disciples of what may be called the Todgers school of economy; that remarkable matron, as Dickens tells us, caring little for the solid sustenance of her boarders, provided "the gravy" was abundant and satisfactory.

Upon what principle can the citizen, who thinks before he casts his ballot, justify himself in voting increased taxes upon his neighbors for the purpose of establishing a library? He must assume the necessity of public schools, and then argue that he may vote for a library that will supplement the elementary instruction which the town provides. And the justification is ample. If our schools are so conducted as to awaken a taste for knowledge and give a correct method in English reading, the town library may represent the university brought

to every man's door. But suppose a large portion of the funds taken from tax-payers is devoted to circulating ephemeral works of mere amusement. Is it not as monstrous for me to vote to tax my neighbor to furnish the boys and girls with "A Terrible Tribulation," or "Lady So-and-So's Struggle," as it would be for the purpose of providing them with free tickets to witness "Article 47" or "The Black Crook"? These romances and dramas (to represent them in the most favorable point of view) are evanescent productions, designed to meet the market demand for the intense and spasmodic. Their claims to patronage from the public purse are precisely similar.

So far, the citizen has a right to object as a tax-payer. But, if he were truly solicitous for the welfare of the community about him, the protest might be far deeper. For the weak spot in our school system lies just here: while claiming immense credit for giving most of our children the ability to read, we show the profoundest indifference about what they read.

But this accomplishment of reading is a very doubtful good if it goes no farther than to give a boy the satisfaction of perusing "The Police Gazette," or introduces a girl to the immoralities of Mr. Griffith Gaunt, and the adventures of a hundred other heroes of characters even more questionable. By teaching our children to read, and then setting them adrift in a sea of feverish literature which vitiates the taste and enervates the character, we show an indifference about as sensible as that of the old lady who thought it could not matter whether her son had gone to the bosom of Abraham or Beelzebub, seeing that they were both Scripture names.

It is not difficult to conceive of communities, existing in Greenland or elsewhere, which might legitimately tax the citizen to furnish his neighbors with their novel-reading. But it can scarcely be disputed that an increased facility for obtaining works of fiction is not the pressing need of our country in this present year of grace. Dr. Isaac Ray, perhaps our highest

authority on morbid mental phenomena, concludes his study on the effects of the prevalent romantic literature in these words: "The specific doctrine I would inculcate is, that the excessive indulgence in novel-reading, which is a characteristic of our times, is chargeable with many of the mental irregularities that prevail among us in a degree unknown at any former period." The late Dr. Forbes Winslow, a physician of similar note in England, used still stronger language in describing how fearfully and fatally suggestive to the minds of the young are those artistically developed records of sin which form the staple of the popular novel. In these days of disordered nerve centres, and commissions to inquire into every thing, we neglect much valuable information which lies upon the surface. It is well to bear in mind that our eminent bibliographer, Mr. Spofford, has informed us that "masses of novels and other ephemeral publications overload most of our popular libraries;" and that our wisest physicians have agreed as to the influence they exert.

Of course these views will be met by a brusque statement that town libraries must supply such books as people want, and that they demand the current novels in unlimited quantities. But I repudiate the dismal fallacy upon which such an argument is based. Plum-cake and champagne would doubtless be demanded at a Sunday-school picnic, were these delicacies placed upon the table; but, if the committee did not think it necessary to supply them from the parish funds, is it certain that a fair amount of cold beef and hasty-pudding would not be consumed in their stead? And if a heartless man-government declined to furnish Maggie and Mollie with "The Pirate's Penance" or "The Bride's Bigamy" for their Sabbath reading, is it not possible that those fair voters of the future might substitute Mrs. Fawcett's interesting illustrations of political economy, or some outline of human physiology, their knowledge of which would bless an unborn generation?

I do not advocate the absurdity of a town

library which should chiefly consist of authors like Plato and Professor Peirce. No one can doubt that the great majority of its volumes should be emphatically *popular* in their character. They should furnish intelligible and interesting reading to the average graduate of the town schools. And there is no lack of such works. The outlines of physical and social science have been written by men of genius in simple and attractive style. History and biography in the hands of their masters give a healthy stimulus to the imagination, and tend to strengthen the character. The function of a town library should be to supply reading improving and interesting, and yet, in the best sense of the word, popular; and I maintain that this can be done, without setting up a rival agency to the news-stand, the book-club, and the weekly paper, for the circulation of the novels of the day.

There is a saying of Dr. Johnson, to the effect, that, if a boy be let loose in a library, he is likely to give himself a very fair education.

But, in accepting this dictum, we must remember the sort of library the doctor had in his mind. As known to him, it was based upon solid volumes of systematized information. Besides these were the noblest poems of the world, a very few great romances, and ponderous tomes of controversial theology; good, healthy food, and much of it attractive to an unpampered boy-appetite.

But the range of a large library is by no means necessary to produce the soundest educational results. Can it be doubted that familiar knowledge of a small case of well-selected books — such, for instance, as the modest stipend of a country clergyman easily collects — is better for boy and girl than the liberty of devouring a thousand highly-flavored sweets in the free library? At all events, a few old-fashioned people do not question it. "A year ago," writes one of them, "Alice used to read Irving and Spenser, and Tom was dipping into Gibbon and Shakespeare; liking them well enough, yet preferring a game of base-ball to

either, as it was proper he should. But the town library was opened, and these young people are found crouching over novels in out-of-the-way corners, when they ought to be at play; or reading surreptitiously at night, when they ought to be asleep." It is in vain to throw all the responsibility upon parents. American parents are very busy, and somewhat careless. Mrs. Fanny Firefly's highly-seasoned love-stories for girls, and Mr. Samuel Sensation's boy-novels and spiced preparations of boned history, are got up, like the port-wine drops of the confectioners, to tempt and to sell. And they do their work. No one can examine the average boy and girl of the period without being struck with their ignorance of the great works of English literature which young people of a former generation were accustomed to read with profit and delight.

The function of a town library is to supplement the town schools; to gratify the taste for knowledge which they should have imparted; and to serve as an instrument for that self-

education to which there is no limit. But taxpayers are not bound to circulate twenty-seven thousand novels against nineteen hundred volumes of biography and seventeen hundred of history, according to the figures of one report; or to expend two-thirds of the working force of their establishment in sending out "novels and juveniles," according to the statement of another. In a word, information, not excitement, should be imbibed from the atmosphere of the town library. That prevailing infirmity of our time which seems to substitute sensibility for morality should there find small encouragement. But we shall never know what this institution might do for a community, so long as the temptation of free novels is thrust in the faces of all who enter. For it is not to be expected that our youth fresh from school, moving among the countless agitations of American life, will select reading that may require some mental exertion, so long as mental excitement is offered them in unlimited amounts.

I am well aware how much may be said for

the story-tellers, and how many people there are to say it; and, whenever there is danger of their being unduly neglected, my voice shall be loudly raised in their behalf. But one may allow the claims of the romancers, from Scheherazade to Mrs. Southworth, and yet maintain that the theory upon which the average town library is run is faulty. There is no virtue in despising cakes and ale, and the heat of ginger in the mouth may at times impart a wholesome glow to the entire system. But it does not quite follow that it is the function of American towns to supply these stimulants gratis, at the expense of their tax-payers. While we consider the immense amount of reading of a certain sort that a town library supplies, it is well to remember that there are other sorts of reading it may possibly prevent. For it may encourage reading precisely as prodigality encourages industry. Luxury and profusion do indeed feed industry, and demoralize it; but the industry which serves God by blessing man, they prevent from being fed. I fear that in these days

more noble capacities die of a surfeit from too much poor reading, than starve from want of good books. The valid defence of institutions working in the interest of State education is this: they prevent a waste of power. When any one of them can be shown to encourage waste of power, it needs looking after. In our complex social condition, the real consequences of any government interference extend far beyond its apparent consequences. An institution may be very useful up to a certain point, and yet hurtful if allowed to run its full course without restraining criticism.

The managers of our smaller libraries are apt to be picked men, who give unrequited labor and intelligence to their trust. But they are chosen at town-meeting, and to a certain extent must carry out the wishes of their electors. Upon this matter, as upon most others, it is the duty of the thoughtful men and women to create a wholesome public opinion. They must recognize the fact that the change from a few good books to an unlimited supply of all sorts

of books is by no means an unmixed advantage to a community. While the results of town libraries, taken in the aggregate, are undoubtedly good, it is our duty to consider whether they ought not to be better.

THE ABUSE OF READING.

DR. HOLMES has pointed a well-known sarcasm against the man who "goes out" at a lecture: he goes out because he knows that his brain is full. It is said that orators at country lyceums have borrowed this jest with great effect when the first pair of boots went creaking down the aisle. On one occasion, however, the man who was going out suddenly faced about, waited for the laughter to subside, and put in this reply: "I cordially accept your explanation of my departure. I do go out because I know that my brain is full. By so doing, I set an example much needed, and show myself a hero of a rare type. I enjoy your rhetoric and wit as thoroughly as anybody. Nay, it is only by a strong effort of the will that I can deny myself the pleasure of sitting here, night after night, to hear you and your

brother-artists discourse volubly upon all subjects under heaven. But, at this precise point of your discourse, I have received as many new ideas as I can appropriate. I therefore propose to return home, where I shall refer to principles the facts you have mentioned; or it may be that I shall compare them with a few other facts of my own observation, and attempt to generalize them all into a system. The physiologists write treatises upon the importance of ceasing to eat as soon as one has taken into the stomach such amount of food as it can perfectly assimilate, and from which it can develop a maximum of force. It is doubtless a pleasant self-indulgence to partake of choice dishes after that period, and to dull the consciousness of abuse with draughts of wine as sparkling as your discourse. But he who declines over-feasting commands the respect of the wise. Feeling that my brain is full, it appears that you can no longer pour into it, but only over it. If I go out, it may be because I am the only one of your auditors who has sense enough to know

his limit of appropriation, and self-respect enough to act upon it."

I am not certain that this is a true story. Its authenticity has been impeached, upon the ground that it is utterly incredible that the feeblest human brain should find itself clogged, or in any way incommoded, with the amount of wisdom dispensed in an hour's worth of lyceum lecture. But, if we are compelled to regard the narrative as a myth or parable, it may be well to consider the symbolic teaching that it was designed to convey. Perhaps, if the printed word be substituted for that which is spoken, the defence of this man who went out may acquire its true pertinency.

It has often been remarked, upon occasions of high festival, that the attempt to teach every citizen to read was the crowning glory of our beloved country. To which worthy service we are about to add another, whose possibilities of usefulness it would be difficult to exaggerate. Already the order has been given, "Let the State, that has so tenderly taught us to read,

furnish abundant free literature in books, periodicals, and newspapers." And this growing popular instinct, that no public expenditure may yield better returns than the town library, is wholly right. Contrast this institution with the bear-garden, the cock-pit, or the open bar of our ancestors, and it seems ungracious to hint that its blessed privileges are susceptible of abuse. Nevertheless, the saying of a great philosopher, that the legislator can educate in one direction only by *un*educating in some other, has a percentage of truth that it will not do to forget. The State can furnish us with no gift that is incapable of perversion. The nobler the beneficence offered, the greater is the necessity for self-restraint and intelligent co-operation on the part of the citizen whom it is designed to benefit. And so in these days, when reading is confidently recommended as the chief means of culture, it is well that its powers for evil and good should be judiciously estimated.

There is an assumption in the air, that, if a person of coarse or unformed tastes can be in-

duced to read any thing not absolutely indictable, he is not only out of harm's way for the time, but his face is surely set Zionward. And it is still more confidently assumed, that, if the citizen of fair moral character and refined tastes can be caught reading a really good author, we may be sure that he is spending his time in a manner most conducive to his own welfare, and to the interests of his brother tax-payers who have furnished him with his book. Neither of these assumptions should pass unquestioned.

Not long ago, I had a few words to say upon mischief that might possibly come through our abundant facilities for poor reading. The crimes of a continent served up daily with every foul detail by a large portion of the press; sentimental interviews with murderers by New-York journalists, who give their remarks with rather more minuteness than Plato thought it worth while to employ in reporting Socrates; trashy novels, confounding virtue and vice in specious paradoxes, giving totally false ideas of human existence and human duty, — few will

maintain that this sort of reading is improving, or even innocent. But those most willing to confess the sad results of incessant poor reading may have failed to estimate the injury that constantly and increasingly threatens the higher class of readers from *too much good reading*. This it is that I ask them to consider.

How many of us who keenly enjoy books are able to throw them aside just at that moment when they have stirred to their utmost efficiency those intellectual and moral faculties which constitute our*selves*, and for whose development and use we are accountable! I have known those who would have done as well to pay a man to keep them from books as Coleridge did in paying one to keep him from opium. Worthy persons they were, of good natural endowments, who never achieved the deep decisive lives of which they were capable. They never seemed able to summon the strength of will to think out a subject for themselves, when, by going to a library, they could indolently gratify their curiosity by reading what other men had

thought about it. The civilization of Athens, the most wonderful and widely-diffused that the world has seen, never came through this endless reading. Her great teacher resolutely fought against that false appearance and conceit of knowledge that our over-indulgence in literature is so apt to give. He thought it his first duty to warn his hearers that ready-made intelligence could in no way be communicated to them. He could only aid them in developing the germs of knowledge already present in their minds. The Socratic figure of the midwife limits the function of the writer as well as that of the speaker. This perpetual easy reading tends to encourage that unhappiest state of mind for young persons, when the thoughts are directed to no definite end, but dance about from one author to another, finding rest nowhere. It threatens to make us characterless. We have dearly purchased our one virtue of tolerance when nothing seems so settled as to be worth a conviction.

Some of us are old enough to remember cer-

tain venerable survivors of a generation that was brought up on comparatively few books. How little knew the so-called educated men of that period, and yet how much! They were well acquainted with the greater Greek and Roman classics; and in English they had read and re-read Locke, Bacon, Milton in prose and verse, Shakespeare, and, above all, the Bible. An intimate acquaintance with these few volumes constituted their culture; but these they had mastered. They made extracts from them in commonplace-books, discussed them at their social meetings, and, as it were, absorbed them into their blood. They read actively, not passively. They were not tempted to hurry through a book because there was a public library across the way offering a thousand others equally worthy of attention. They were compelled to make the most of their author, to pause over his statements, question his conclusions, and to arbitrate between truth and his view of it. It is easy to recognize the work done by this measured reading towards develop-

ing the intellect, storing the mind with images, and training the man to habits of accuracy and perseverance.

Warnings against the danger here noticed have been occasionally heard. "Strange," exclaims Henry Rogers, "if that excess of literature which we take to be a security against a second invasion of barbarism should bring about a condition of things not much better!" Niebuhr has lamented that "the great multiplication of books gives rise to the danger of a still-born learning as unprolific as the double flowers of our gardens." And it is true that we occasionally meet with immense readers, whose knowledge consists of reports of cases filed away in the memory, but who have left themselves no time to cultivate the perception of relation necessary to deduce the unknown from the known, and so coin their treasures for current use. Yet this is certainly not the special peril against which the average American reader should receive friendly counsel. It is no still-born *learning* that his miscellaneous reading is

likely to produce. Nothing worthy that name can be expected to come of it. For it is something to retain in the memory the verbal expressions of results, even when the intellect is not put to work to grasp any principle they may point out. And, if much of our high-pressure reading fails to give even this potentiality of power, it is well to face the fact, that the works of thinkers and reasoners may be taken in opiate doses, and dull the faculties of thought and reason in ourselves.

Mr. Brown, a gentleman of middle age, who is gradually withdrawing from active business, lives with his family in a prosperous New-England town. There is a public library next door, constantly supplied with freshest books. By borrowing the cards of their servants, who seldom use them, the Browns keep six or eight volumes going at a time. They are a reading family, bound to read the best periodicals and newspapers in the reading-room, as well as all the best books that appear upon the shelves. They have chipped off hasty scraps of every thing, and

read themselves into impartial imbecility upon all sides of every question. Some or all of them have drifted through the conspicuous authors of the day in morals, theology, poetry, romance, philosophy, and science. Renan and Newman, Schopenhauer and Swedenborg, Browning and Büchner, Taine, Matthew Arnold, Grote, Ruskin, these, and a hundred others, have come like shadows through the household, and so departed. They have a nodding street-acquaintance with many choice persons, but among them all no friend. Of the greater English classics, Brown's young people, who profess to be highly educated, know nothing at all. They stand unopened where their grandfathers left them. They are, after all, hard reading, also slow reading, demanding some attention; and where is the time? Here come popularized sciences profusely illustrated; society romances by really clever writers; speculations in religion, charming in style, and of undoubted originality; atheism, perfumed with sentiment, and defended with critical scholar-

ship. These must be read or half-read, skimmed or skipped through; for behold new books are coming down upon us, not as single spies, but in battalions! As Yankee tax-payers, we are bound to make a good bargain. We must keep up with the age and the library.

"Intellectual emancipation," said the great German, "if it does not give us command over ourselves, is poisonous." A Goethe, doubtless, might read all that Brown and his family undertake to read, and use every word of it. But Brown is not Goethe, but only Brown. Like you and me, he was born to train with the rank and file of well-intentioned, commonplace American citizens. He wants a few good books, administered thoroughly and in proper sequence, to energize his work, and elevate his character. These might inspire him with a worthy sense of his function as Brown; they might give his humble powers a maximum of efficiency; they might induce him to perform the irksome duties of social intercourse with neighbors not quite so wise as he is; they might give him strength to

bear his full burden of gross, unpleasant political work; for we may be sure that the politicians who have kindly used their "influence" to furnish him with a free library, ask only that he will stay there, and not disturb their packed caucus.

Of course, Brown has a dim fancy that he and his family are getting *educated* at a furious rate. But what a satire upon the derivation of the word! He draws nothing out of himself, and does not succeed in putting much in that is valuable. He never tastes one flavor of his own mind. As Hamlet is unable to act because he cannot stop thinking, so Brown becomes unable to think or act because he cannot stop reading. But his books have not widened his effective knowledge, or even increased his power of expression. To him the universe seems a blur of echoes, a confusion of hearsays and distant reports. His individuality is almost obliterated; and the honest work of making what he could of himself he has failed to do.

To any one disposed to use some conscience

in his reading, there comes this perplexing question: What ought I to do about newspapers? To which inquiry, at least this partial answer may be confidently returned: You cannot do without them. Doubt any one's good sense who speaks scornfully of newspapers. There is much in them that is trifling, and perhaps demoralizing; but, in the best of them, how much that is wise and noble! What wealth of enjoyment and instruction they may bring to every home where they are rightly selected and rightly read! I have a few choice volumes on my shelves, among them an Olivet Cicero and a folio Shakespeare; but I would save my newspaper scrap-books before either of them. I have no volumes that contain so much sound thought, good English, good sense, and important knowledge. If you ask for wit, I will agree to match every jest and sarcasm in "The School for Scandal" with something from my scrap-book quite as good in the way of epigram, and flashed upon some mischief which it is important should be seen. Here are full reports of lectures on his-

tory by Hedge, poetry by Lowell, science by Agassiz and Tyndall. Here are Mill's speeches in parliament, his free-trade letters to New-York admirers, and Mr. Greeley's reply to them. You will find copious extracts giving the heart of the best modern books, and intelligent summaries of the systems they advocate. Here are occasional sermons into which leading American divines have put their most earnest thought; here are vigorous expressions of the best political intelligence clipped from the leaders of the best newspapers; and, quite as important, here are little crisp criticisms of blundering political work from indignant citizens whose daily duty has brought them face to face with absurdities of legislation. Take the best newspapers by all means, — as many of them as you can afford, — and then take nine-tenths of their reading-matter for granted. Some of it is good for nobody; much of it is good for somebody: but only a small part is wanted by you. But how precious are these fragments, if wisely chosen! If you are interested in the investigation of any politi-

cal subject, — and every American citizen should have some study of this sort, — you will find in almost every newspaper an illustration of some aspect of it. Remember that it is better to subscribe to a few first-class newspapers, that you may read at home with the scissors in your hand, than to glance over a score of them in a public reading-room. Almost every thing that it is good and useful to know gets said or copied or suggested in some column of our free press. Venerable absurdities are exposed by thinkers of acknowledged ability, and institutions worth preserving are defended against the assaults of the foolish. But, if newspapers may be put to noblest uses, they may be so used as to enervate, and even to demoralize. Let us love them wisely, but not too well.

If the danger here hinted at be admitted, it is not easy to point out the remedy. We must make a compromise between the demands of an existing state of things and the ideal conditions of Utopia. It would be absurd to lay down any rule as of universal application. Our powers

of acquiring facts, of incorporating them with our individual culture, and of using them for symmetrical growth, are as different as our powers of physical endurance. Each one of us must find the law of his own constitution, and obey it. To discourage the present demand for free reading would be as foolish as to oppose the cheapening of food because the doctors tell us that nine people out of every ten eat more than is good for them. But let us be careful, that, while we express a reasonable gratification that our people are obtaining free access to books, we do not seem to proclaim a false principle. Profitable reading has always demanded positive mental effort; and, in these days, it also requires the sternest self-control. It is possible that our constantly multiplying libraries may keep the word of promise to the eye, to break it to the hope; for a maximum of ease in obtaining even good authors does not necessarily secure a maximum of utility for their works.

We are not only committed to free education, but, as it now seems, to free reading. Let us

fight it out bravely on that line. Only let us remember that collective society can give no one a privilege without creating an obligation. In the town library, there is committed to our care what should be the most beneficent institution yet born into the world. It is for us of the present generation to establish its traditions. This great responsibility cannot be avoided. Let those in authority provide what securities they may against the excessive application of a good principle. Let the wise citizen also, both by example and counsel, protest against its perversion to evil.

THE BETTER SAMARITAN.

AS it is possible that some good persons have not made up their minds concerning the expediency of putting satire into sermons, I will not "injure my influence," as the phrase used to run, by defending its propriety. There is, however, no peril in venturing upon the assertion, that, if sarcasm is to be admitted to the pulpit, a discourse by Rev. George L. Chaney, entitled "A Defence of Ananias," is a capital example of the effective employment of that keenest weapon. After reading the excuses for the conduct of this much-maligned member of the early church (and the argument which the gifted metropolitan divine brought forward in his behalf was plausible enough to satisfy anybody but a very bigoted Christian), I said to myself, "Here is at last a clergyman competent to preach that sermon upon the Bet-

ter Samaritan, for which the world has so long waited." It was not to be doubted that the liberal author of the Plea for Ananias would be able to show that the petty and insipid virtue of assisting a distressed traveller on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho had been egregiously over-estimated. It may well be questioned whether the familiar parable — founded, as some have liked to believe, upon a real incident — deserves the high place in ethical teaching which has commonly been assigned to it. After all, the Samaritan's deed was but a cheap assistance to one unlucky traveller that chance threw in his way. His wine and oil could not have cost much; and, if you talk of the miserable twopence which he paid at the inn, some of us who have just set down our fifty dollars upon a fashionable subscription-paper (which it really would not do to decline) may be permitted to toss our heads a little over the old-fashioned narrative.

Those of my readers who are in the habit of paying a Sunday visit to a certain select ceme-

tery in the vicinity of one of our American cities have often paused in admiration before the costly monument to old Demas, which is its principal attraction. They will all remember the beautiful bronze bas-relief, representing the Good Samaritan, which has been set in the marble that recounts the virtues of his more worthy successor. It is evident that this bit of cunningly-wrought metal was designed to furnish the text to that sermon in stone which the quarry-man and the sculptor were hired to preach. It seems to say, "If you designate this scriptural personage by his familiar adjective, logic will require you to use its comparative degree in paying homage to the Better Samaritan, in whose glory this shaft is reared." It would surely not be difficult for the ingenious divine, who succeeded so wonderfully in the case of Ananias, to adapt the somewhat hackneyed parable to the requirements of this later claimant for the regard of good men.

"Our beloved Demas, my brethren" (for in some such way the memorial sermon might

run), "our beloved and sagacious Demas, knew too much to trouble himself with any retail distribution of charity, which would have required his personal attention, and the use of his private beast of burden. He knew that 'that sort of business,' to borrow his own incisive language, 'was pretty well played out.' But, if he seemed to neglect the teachings of the parable I have read to you, it was only because he had hit upon a comprehensive method of improving its obsolete instructions. If he was known upon the street as a rapacious old miser, quick to take advantage of his brothers' necessities, it was because he meant to show such kindness to our sect of True Zionites as would fully justify far less venial transgressions. For, if it were necessary for me to show that our departed patron of blessed memory inherited no taint from that ancestral Demas whom the apostle accuses of deserting him 'through love of this present world,' I need only to point to that large sum of money he hath left to build a True Zion chapel, which shall always be called

by his honored name. Consider, too, if he hath not wrought better than that second Demas, concerning whom 'The Pilgrim's Progress' finds something to tell us. You will remember that the dreaming tinker (who saw more clearly than many people who think they are awake) found this Demas, junior, comfortably established as proprietor of a silver mine, wherein he invites Messrs. By-Ends and Hold-the-World 'to do some digging for treasure.' Alas that the damps of that mine should have proved so unwholesome to pilgrims as to lessen the profits of the enterprising owner, upon whom Bunyan is careful to bestow the epithet 'gentleman-like'! And how well is it for the sacred causes of religion and charity that *our* Demas found means of working this same silver mine through paper certificates of stock, by the manipulating of which he was able to make much more money, and also avoid the subterranean miasmas which in Bunyan's time were reckoned so perilous. But I must hasten to relate the peculiar incident which will measure, after approved modern

standards, the superiority of this our Better Samaritan to his scriptural prototype. One day, as Demas was driving from his elegant country-seat to the city, urging his bays lest he should be late upon Change, he saw a wounded traveller lying by the way side. Of course, no proper person could have expected him to stop, and stain the satin cushions of his phaeton with the dirt and blood of this unhappy wayfarer. That sort of conduct might have done well enough for the old-fashioned Samaritan. But we have long abandoned his style of doing business, and, as you will see in the sequel, found out a more excellent way to win the praise of the churches as great philanthropists. And so, as an important operation in stocks was contemplated that very morning, our Better Samaritan felt obliged to hurry on to the business quarter of the city, where he arrived soon after the Priest and the Levite, who happened to have pressing engagements in the same locality. Of course, our worthy benefactor did not wholly escape

the shafts of envy. Certain small-minded persons professed to disapprove the methods by which he rolled up his riches. They noted the fact, that, while Demas was constantly recommending the stocks of his silver mine to small investors, he happened to have none of them on his hands when the panic came which rendered them valueless. The little incident of the wounded traveller was also made the occasion for some disrespectful comments by those who had a liking for that petty form of charity which goes out from the person, rather than from the purse. But these cavillers were put to shame when our Better Samaritan — being near his end, and naturally desirous of laying up treasure to be enjoyed in the next world — bequeathed the bulk of his property to found the *Demas Institute for Distressed Travellers;* making his friend, the Levite, chairman of the board of trustees, and his minister, the Priest, chaplain for life, with the right to appoint his successor. And what a world of good the Demas Institute is destined

to do, besides providing comfortable berths for the True Zion professors who are appointed to administer it! At first, you remember, it was rather difficult to find distressed travellers to be relieved; but, by persistent advertising, an abundant supply of them has at length been obtained. As testimony to the wonderful work which the Institute is accomplishing, I need only quote at random from its Annual Report: 'Case 64. — *Thomas Jones, driving his cart to market, lost a wheel. New wheel with patent axle supplied by the Institute. Offered to paint his cart if he would become a True Zionite. Offer accepted.*' 'Case 343. *Patrick Foley, after selling his cabbages, stopped at too many taverns on his way home, and finally fell off his cart, and was robbed on the highway. The Institute made up the amount of money he had lost, and gave him fifty tracts to distribute among his neighbors.*' But I need not multiply examples of a beneficence which will endure from generation to generation, and extend our True Zion creed by furnishing a haven of rest for an

ever-increasing number of its professors. And it behooveth us especially to rejoice that the heavy taxes, which this great Demas estate was forced to pay during the pilgrimage of its late possessor, are remitted to the saints who have fallen heirs to its fatness. Well may we celebrate from pulpit and press the merits of our wealthy benefactor! This Better Samaritan's money — annually increased by beneficent legislation — seems likely to relieve thousands of distressed travellers, where the Good Samaritan gave his personal attention to the assistance of one. We may well hold up our departed brother as an example for the imitation of youth, and appropriate for his noble deed the long-misapplied precept, '*Go thou and do likewise.*'"

It cannot be doubted that the eulogium of Demas, in the hands of the preacher of the Ananias sermon, would be given with a delicacy and plausibility of which my rough notes can furnish no indication. The traits that I have magnified by exaggeration, in order that

they might be clearly seen, would have no undue prominence above that safe level of panegyric which would appear to give the result of countless hasty opinions. So ingeniously would the whole matter be managed, that many of the congregation would be confused and startled when the preacher should come to that division of his discourse where he must abruptly announce that hitherto he had been speaking after the manner of men, and very foolish men too; and that he scorned the sophistry he had permitted himself to utter. Our Better Samaritan would then receive the uncompromising exposure that such shams deserve. It would be shown how the community, which he pretended to benefit with his absurd institution, was far worse off than if no Demas had glorified himself at its expense. Only the most arbitrary and one-sided collection of facts could give the Institute the appearance of utility that had been claimed for it. There was a set of stolid officials, supported by a tax-exempted fund, and placed under heavy

bonds, to fetter a generation to a creed which it might be struggling to discard for better representations of truth. The charitable work of the institution was a specious humbug. It created the class of persons who were nominally benefited. The fact that its agents were at hand to relieve disabled travellers caused the farmers and stable-men to grow careless about their wheels and harnesses. The highways leading to the city were deplorably neglected; for travellers found it less troublesome to become beneficiaries of the Demas fund than to prosecute the towns through which the roads passed. It is difficult to see how a given amount of money could have been used to worse purpose. Bribes were offered for shiftlessness, and, as it might turn out, for hypocrisy. Not content with demoralizing the time in which he lived, this much-bepraised stockmonger placed obstructions in the way of realizing those better social conditions in the future for which good men are laboring. But the pomp of machine-made charity, be

it never so much eulogized by hasty talkers, can furnish no lasting opiate for a sinner's conscience. I like to think how the minister's voice would ring through the meeting-house as he would assure his flock that modern improvements in the work of the Good Samaritan cannot be considered lawful substitutes; and that to measure charity by the institution is as preposterous as to measure grace by the cord, or penitence by the bushel.

It will seem to savor of temerity in a layman to adumbrate, in this hazy fashion, the discourse that might be preached from the text furnished by this famous monument. Those who would judge how luminously the subject could be displayed by one expert in sacred oratory are referred to the sermon upon Ananias, already mentioned as having suggested its full capabilities. Look it up among the back numbers of the "Christian Register," and you will agree with me that it were worth while to assist at the rhetorical inflation of this exceedingly commonplace Crœsus, and

afterwards to witness the skilful punctures by which the gas would be let out of him, in order that what remained might be held up as a warning before the world.

Thank Heaven, we have all met some Samaritans of the good old school! — men who might have died rich, and afflicted us with institutions, had they not distributed their wealth in unrecorded ways as they journeyed on. They never enjoyed the prestige of being millionnaires, and made no bids for the unctuous eulogiums of pious ignorance; but, in their day and generation, they created force. Vainly the physicist may object, that no man can create force, but only change its direction. I am not speaking of the force which moves matter, but of that which sways mind; and it is an allowable figure of speech to say that this force is created, or, if you like, brought down into this lower world, by the intelligent self-sacrifice of man.

Let me add a few paragraphs which may suggest additional matter for this sermon,

whenever some good minister of the Broad Church shall be moved to preach it.

To seem charitable is about the easiest sort of imposture that a knave can undertake. To be charitable is the most difficult, as it is the worthiest, task that a saint can set himself. But, if our average saint would attempt his charity by large and conspicuous methods, I fear that he must somewhat abridge his devotions in order to devote more of his time to patient thinking and exact research. "Not one man in a million," exclaims Mr. Parton, "knows how to give away a million of dollars so that it will not do more harm than good." At first, we may be startled at the exaggeration of such a dictum; but, the farther we penetrate into the depth and complexity of the subject, the nearer it approximates the truth. We can see a few facts smiling sweetly upon the surface; but there are a thousand awkward facts beneath the surface whose nature we must infer. How solemn is our warning from that mass of pauperism which afflicts

England, and which has been shown to be so largely the product of a hasty and spurious philanthropy! Mr. Thomas Beggs has published a striking paper, confirming by facts and figures the conclusions of the best students of social science. He claims that an enormous sum annually spent in charity in London increases the distress it pretends to relieve. Mr. W. R. Greg scarcely exaggerates the belief of many thoughtful Englishmen when he writes, "The form which charity has a tendency to assume in societies, so complicated as all civilized societies are growing now, is such as to drain the practice of nearly all its incidental good. . . . Charitable endowments and bequests are ingenious contrivances for diffusing the most wide-spread pauperism." Mr. Mill's jealousy of State interference, and sense of the importance of allowing the widest range to individual peculiarities, seem at one time to have inclined him to views not unfavorable to the mass of British endowments. His latest words upon this subject have therefore

all the weight of admissions wrung from a most unwilling witness: "Of all the abuses and malversations in the management of public matters in this country, the abuses of endowments are most flagrant. It begins to be felt that the whole of them ought to be taken in hand by the nation, and thoroughly reformed: and a thorough reform in most cases means that their lands should either be managed for them by the State, or taken away altogether; such of them as are fit to be continued receiving money endowments instead. If this were done, a great extent of landed possessions would be at the disposal of the nation; and, with all the defects of State management, management by endowed institutions is generally so much worse, that even after giving them full compensation, to which many of them are by no means entitled, a considerable surplus would probably be realized by the State. Much of this is town property; and a distinguished member of this association, who knows the subject officially, can tell you

that one may walk for several miles across London without once taking his foot off the property of some endowed institution. I have seen it estimated that a fifth part of London belongs to them."

Without implying that no more institutions should be founded, it may be safely asserted, that, the wiser a man is, the more cautious he will be in assuming the great responsibility of their creation. Doubtless there are ways in which rich men may harmlessly, and even worthily, perpetuate names; but they must be taught what care is to be exercised, if this is to be innocently done. Endowments, place them where you will, produce indirect effects that were never looked for. Certainly Mr. Astor's gift of a free library to the city of New York would appear to be a form of charity that could give nothing but good results; and yet a leading journal of that city has undertaken to show that this noble bequest, by reason of restrictions whose effect the donor could not have foreseen, has injured

the literary resources of New York, and driven scholars to Boston to obtain books which a free metropolitan library would otherwise have supplied. I am far from asserting that this opinion is correct; but the fact that responsible persons have adopted it is worthy of notice. Endowments for the purpose of promoting the higher education would seem to be among the surest means of bestowing posthumous benefits upon the community; but, to insure this, the property must be left, free of restrictions, to the intelligence of the successive generations who are to use it. President Porter assures us that the tens of millions of dollars bequeathed by rich men to found superfluous colleges and pretended universities have been wasted, *and worse than wasted.* And the judgment of this eminent gentleman has been indorsed by many of our most competent educators. The "New-York Nation" — whose opinion in matters connected with the higher education is deservedly respected — warns us that "the number of these ill-advised and somewhat eccentric

testators increases every year;" and that "we are threatened with the spectacle, during the coming century, of the greatest waste of money by well-meaning persons that the world has ever seen." When, therefore, the average millionnaire is debating, after Pope's well-known alternative, whether to "endow a college or a cat," it is by no means certain that he should not be encouraged to select the cat, who will in time live out her nine lives, and restore the property to the natural uses of the community. The demoralizing sequences, in one case, would soon come to an end: in the other, they might extend over centuries.

There is sometimes a fallacious way of estimating the utility of an endowment for education, which it may be well to notice. Sydney Smith tells us that colleges take to themselves credit for all the intellect which they do not succeed in paralyzing. And it is certain that other endowed institutions of learning have been gifted with similar powers of appropriation. Doubtless the sectarian school that Brown

founded a century ago can show a list of eminent jurists, authors, and divines, whom it claims to have educated. But, born into an intelligent community, these gifted men would have found education somewhere; and it is at least conceivable that the education might have been better adapted to their needs had it been controlled by the ideas of a living generation, instead of those of the dead Mr. Brown. It may have happened that some of these gifted men were neither religious men, nor even moral men, just because religion and morality were presented to them all twisted up with Brown's scheme of theology, which they found repulsive to reason and conscience.

Not long ago I received a letter requesting me to unite with some of the most intelligent men in the community in bringing the name of an able and successful teacher before the trustees of a certain endowed seminary for the instruction of youth. A prominent position in the institution was to be filled; and professors and divines who were interested in education

voluntarily came forward to express the hope that the claims of a certain gentleman might be considered. They offered abundant testimony to the excellence of his scholarship, the purity of his character, and the power of his moral influence as an educator. He was known to be a church attendant and a supporter of Christian institutions. I sought an interview with the chairman of the board of trustees, only to be told, with all courtesy, that he was unable to give any consideration to the strongly attested claims of the gentleman in question. He kindly explained to me his views of his duty as the sworn administrator of a certain trust; and it must be acknowledged that they were correct. And this was the saddest feature of the whole matter. The gentleman, whose peculiar fitness for the position was urged by the best men of his day, had one fatal defect. He could not declare his belief that certain doctrines were taught in the Scriptures. Upon this point he shared the doubts, not only of many religious and learned laymen, but of studious divines

whom the world calls theologians. "If every ducat in the six thousand ducats that you offer me were in six parts, and every part a ducat," declares Shylock, "I will not take them: I will have my pound of Christian flesh." "If every testimonial to the worth of your candidate were multiplied by six, and then again by six hundred," virtually exclaims the deceased founder, "I will not look at them: I will have my pound of dogmatic theology." Of all the doleful sounds from the tombs to which the hymn challenges our attention, there can be few more doleful than this.

Need it be suggested how endowments made from honorable motives, and able to show a record of apparent utility, may become grievous temptations to third-rate men, leading them to sophisticate with their intellects for the sake of holding places of profit and influence to which they have no just title? I have no word to say against creeds and tenets and articles, when they are found in their proper places. They are to be respected so long as they are the natural

outcomes of the thought and knowledge of living men. Doubtless he does well who assigns a portion of his annual earnings to pay the current expenses of preaching a doctrine which his judgment heartily accepts. In that case he will see that his faith is inculcated by men who thoroughly believe it, and in whom he thoroughly trusts. He will constitute himself a critic to see that his money is economically used, and will study the results that its annual expenditure produces. It is a good thing to give money in order that zeal, which burns brightly in living hearts, may blaze before the world. It is not a good thing to leave an income which may soon come to pay unscrupulous persons for simulating zeal for dogmas that have lost their vitality. The spirit of man is undergoing a development as regular as that of the world which he inhabits. Our systems and beliefs should never be closed against the correction of a new experience. The good Puritan, Robinson, announced a fundamental principle of Democracy, as well as of Protes-

tantism, when he said, "I am very confident the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his Holy Word." Yes, and outside of his Holy Word too. There is a narrow sphere in which it is our right and duty to judge. Let us not dare to exceed it.

While this writing lies wet upon my desk, I happen to take up a newspaper, and find a bitter complaint of the evil wrought by a sect which has charge of a certain endowed school. These religionists, who are able to control the vote of the town, are represented as opposing a thorough system of graded schools in order that the people might be compelled to use their sectarian institution. "And in consequence," affirms the complainant, "the common schools are crowded, unclassified, and utterly inadequate to the wants of the place." The name of the town is not here given, because I have no means of knowing whether the charges can be substantiated in this special case; but it is evident that such results are not unlikely to follow sectarian endowments, unless they are made

and administered with far more than average intelligence.

I met a chance acquaintance in the cars the other day; and we happened to speak of Mr. Forrest's posthumous liberality, which is to provide a home for decayed actors. My companion seemed much struck with the idea, and remarked that Christendom was sorely in need of houses of refuge for reduced clergymen. He suggested that our millionnaires, without more ado, should provide a plentiful supply of these institutions. I ventured to doubt the wisdom of such endowments; and our conversation ran something like this: —

"Then I suppose you do not believe in clergymen?"

"On the contrary, if I were to mention the half-dozen men whose services our community could least spare, I am sure that three of the names would be those of clergymen."

"Perhaps you think that it would be difficult to find reduced clergymen to fill such institutions?"

"Far from it. I believe that if you went through the alphabet, founding homes for all distressed persons, from afflicted apothecaries to unlucky undertakers, there would not be the slightest difficulty in filling them. In some cases you might have to wait a little while, till your institution had time to create its supply. But, so far as clergymen are concerned, even that inconvenience would be reduced to a minimum. Why, we have been told by a leading Presbyterian journal, that, in the single sect that it represents, there are about fifteen hundred clergymen *educated at the expense of charitable contributions*, who are without pulpits, and disconnected entirely from ministerial work; and this estimate, we are assured, does not include editors, teachers, professors, and secretaries of various religious societies. And so, you see, the fact that A has founded an institution which educates superfluous clergymen is very likely to cause B to found another institution to provide for them. And our neighbor the legislator, at the other end of the car, will

kindly exempt both institutions from taxation; first taxing the people to create superfluous clergymen, and then taxing them again to support them because they are superfluous. And all three may be very honest persons, who think they are doing right, just because they do not think much about it."

As an arrival at the station put a sudden stop to our talk, I here add a few words in modification of a doctrine which my friend may have thought harshly stated: — It is right for you or me to assist a minister towards whom the parish he has served declines to fulfil its duty; but to advertise such assistance, through the perpetual motion of an institution, is only to make parishes more unjust, and ministers less self-reliant. There are some ministers whose want of success has been owing to the narrowness of the pews, and not that of the pulpit. It is well to consider if we cannot give them a hearing, and do something for them in an unostentatious way. And let it never be forgotten that one of the most productive forms that sympathy can take

is in economizing the strength, and sparing the nerves, of a successful *minister*. I now use the word Italicized in no professional or exclusive sense, believing that the Church has no monopoly of these rare servants of humanity. But if your clergyman chances to be one of them; if you know that he is successful in forming brave and noble characters; if you see that he is a precious nucleus around which men come in contact with what is best in each other, — be assured that any aid you can give him is well bestowed. You may add twenty years to his life by seeing that he has a good rest in the summer, and by cushioning off the petty financial perplexities which drain the costly vitality he should give the world. The service-book surely intimates our human duty in its solemn litany. Let us remember the petition which takes precedence of the prayer, — "to comfort and help the weak-hearted." "To strengthen such as do stand" is often to reach the weak-hearted, who require comfort, in the surest way.

Let me not be unjust to institutions that

run upon the income of a fund, and are independent of public criticism. Some of them have their uses; but most of them are poor substitutes for individual thought applied fresh and living to the problems of the day. Let us remember their limits: they may be good instruments of charity, but bad directors of it. If we wish to avail ourselves of their agency, it is better to perfect the freest and best of existing institutions than to found new ones. I see by the paper that an eminent jurist has returned his fee for lectures in the Harvard Law School, and directed that the money shall be expended in buying books for its library. In the same journal I read that a well-known physician has given ten microscopes to the Harvard Medical School, to be loaned to students who are unable to buy such instruments. Here are examples of wise and useful contributions to human welfare. Gifts to institutions of learning, by men whose daily work makes them competent judges of their requirements, are always in order.

Existing endowments for advanced education, when untrammelled by theological conditions, would seem to be among the best claimants for liberality. These may be judiciously increased by those, who, having examined their past and present work, are satisfied that they will accept the knowledge and meet requirements of the future. Beautiful buildings to contain town libraries are among the best benefactions of these latter days: they are gifts to the whole people, subject only to the restrictions which living men who represent them shall from time to time impose; they are properly exempted from taxation, and will keep the names of their donors in fragrant remembrance.

But the best charity is that virtue which insensibly passes out from a good man as he goes about his daily business. He does not undertake to do other people's work in other generations; but, as Mr. Hale writes it, "lends a hand" in his own. He has not put himself beyond the reach of the beautiful parable,

whose teaching is as consonant with sound political economy as it is with the essential spirit of Christianity. "Doubly efficacious," writes Mr. Herbert Spencer, "are all assuagings of distress instigated by sympathy; for not only do they remedy the particular evils to be met, but they help to mould humanity into a form by which such evils will one day be precluded." No foolish, ostentatious almsgiving, demoralizing alike to giver and receiver, is the lesson of the story of the Good Samaritan. The relief is not yielded to clamorous importunity, but flows from an honest human emotion. It represents a form of "utility" which the trained intelligence of the philosopher cannot question. Does there seem to be a gain in physical power when we attempt to do our good things by proxy? There is too frequently a loss of moral power that will more than balance it.

Whenever my sermon comes to be preached by a real minister in a real meeting-house, certain questions may suggest themselves to

the pews which it would be inexpedient to touch from the pulpit: — How far is it right for our democratic society to allow the accidental possessors of its wealth to impose upon other generations their special theological dogmas or their crude notions of mechanical charity? Should we not claim for our children the same freedom, which, in theory at least, we are never tired of asking for ourselves? Let it be granted that it is, on the whole, expedient that certain living men should be permitted, through their property, to direct the forces of the community to an extent absurdly exceeding their merit. Is there to be no end to it? Are legislators bound to respect the ideas of short-sighted testators to the extent to which they are respected in America? The debt which every successful man owes to the community is more than a figure of speech. And, if it be a good debt, has the debtor a right to decree his own legal tender in paying it? Should ignorant and selfish persons, or even well-meaning persons,

who have managed to scrape up riches, be permitted to place obstructions in the way of that healthy modification of human opinion which an advancing society must constantly demand? Judicious readers will perceive that a consideration of these questions is beyond the scope of this present paper. I have taken care to shield myself behind an ample precedent in suggesting that satire might not be out of place in a sermon. It would be rash to assume that political meditations should be mingled with our sabbath instruction.

That well-known Celtic personage, whose nationality is honored by the prefix of the definite article, once declared that he had decided to do nothing for posterity, seeing that no evidence was forthcoming to show that posterity had ever done any thing for him. Now, if "the Irishman" had ever heard of Lord Mansfield's advice to the colonial judge, and had followed it by giving his decision without announcing his reasons, it might take more than an average chief justice to pronounce

a sounder judgment. It is pleasant to think how the honest fellow shook himself clear of a begging phantom, and went about his daily work in his healthy Irish way. I am sure that his subsequent history must have corresponded with that of many of his worthy countrymen whom we all have known. Totally disregarding the importunities of this very necessitous posterity, our good Irishman uses his humble gains to help those who have only the claims of living men and women. He denies himself the comforts that his labor might purchase, in order to send for his brothers and sisters in the old land. He brings to his adopted country warm hearts and willing hands, — the healthy women and sturdy men whom we want. After these duties are discharged, he still denies himself in order to invest in a bit of land that will root his children to the soil, and give the best guarantee of their useful citizenship. If I could identify "the Irishman" with a humble friend of mine, I should credit him with fidelity and honor that might

serve as ideal types of those not too common virtues. Wherever a generous fellowship can smooth life a little for his kindred and neighbors, you will be sure to find him. But, alas. this brave and kindly worker has done nothing for posterity; and, when at last he appears before the Celestial Gates, it would take the pen of John Bunyan to depict his miserable discomfiture. There stands the poor fellow, elbowed aside by pompous old Demas, who bears a cork model of his Institute in one hand, and a photograph of his monument in the other. And now it is to be hoped that this bewildered foreigner regrets his saying about posterity, to which the facetious column in a thousand American newspapers gave such wide publicity. Where are his obituaries, his funeral sermons, his "notices of the press"? — testimonials which his magnificent competitor so confidently presents for the inspection of St. Peter. Ah, well! I like to believe that the astonishment of the famous Monsieur Jourdain, when informed that he had been talking prose

all his life without knowing it, has its counterparts in the immaterial world. One would like to see the smile breaking over that pleasant Irish face as St. Peter assures its possessor, that, despite his emphatic determination, he had devoted his life to the service of posterity, and this in the only certain and efficient way. Vainly the astonished Demas points to his lying epitaph, and to the Institute which his money has set to grinding chaff to mock a hungry world. His masquerade in the character of the Better Samaritan here comes to an end. The saint quotes the text touching the danger of being wise above what is written, and assures him that no one who undertakes to be any better than the Good Samaritan can pass a conservative janitor like himself.

It is time that these random suggestions were brought to a close. Let us hope that we may soon hear this sermon delivered in full, as one of our eloquent divines would know how to do it. When this comes to pass, you will enjoy it all the more from having pre-

viously studied my dry *libretto*, which lacks all the splendors of rhetoric, and the impressiveness of pulpit pause and emphasis. Perhaps some one will say that it is not respectful to anticipate the teachings of the sacred desk. Have we not all enough to do in reducing to practice the instructions of last Sunday's discourse? If, indeed, there has been any profane intrusion among solemn mysteries, an innocence of intention must be humbly pleaded. Would that I were competent to dismiss with the usual benediction all readers who will lay to heart the lesson my unpreached sermon should convey!

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